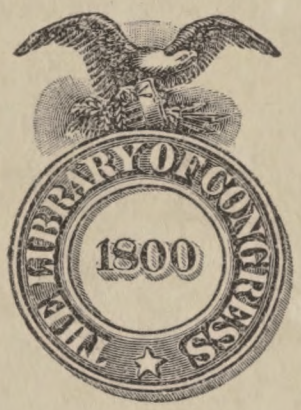

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MUFFIE'S PROPHECY

A PROPHETIC DRAMATIC POEM

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A PROPHETIC DRAMATIC POEM

BY

WILLIAM WALLACE MUFFIE

pseud.

Henry McLean Cronkhite.

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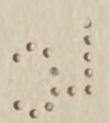

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MUFFIE'S PROPHECY

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

MORTAL:

MUFFIE

IMMORTAL:

MEPHIE

THE FINTO

LEORA

MUFFIE'S PROPHECY

CONCOURSE I

SCENE: Muffie seated upon a bench on Morningside Heights in New York City.
TIME: A bright spring evening.

MUFFIE

Upon this height in happy reverie
I sit alone and view the surging throngs.
The great full moon from her high starry dome
Illumes the springtime beauty of the park,
And, with a magic known to her alone,
Works constant change in forms and colourings.
Beneath my feet and spreading far away,
The city lies, one blaze of light and glory:
Above it speed the glowing railway trains,
Winding along like monster fiery serpents,
Chasing each other madly through the air.

(Muffie's attention is accidentally directed to an open pocketbook beside him on the bench; he takes it up and examines it.)

But what is this? A beautiful portemonnaie
With plentiful supply of notes and gold.

(Muffie counts the money, replaces it, and continues his examination of the pocketbook.)

And here are private papers signed 'O. Mephie,'
The owner's name perhaps; and here again
A lady's ring with jewels all aflame;
That central ruby is a princely gem,
The diamonds little less; how small it is:
The loser lives in affluence: even so
Such great and precious loss is borne with pain.
A rapid step; some person is ascending
The granite stairway from the park below.

(Muffie replaces the ring and puts the portemonnaie in his pocket. Mephie appears at the top of the stairway and approaches Muffie.)

MEPHIE

Your pardon, Sir, for timeless interruption.
I left my pocketbook upon that bench
Some half an hour ago; you may have seen it.

MUFFIE

If so, indeed, you carried it in hand:
A lady's way: few gentlemen do that.

MEPHIE

Quite reasonable, Sir, I had a ring
A size too large: I feared the loss of it,

Took out my book and put the ring inside;
And in abstraction, a great fault of mine,
I left my portemonnaie upon the bench.

MUFFIE

What kind of a ring was yours? Be accurate.

MEPHIE

A chased gold ring of dainty workmanship,
Set with a ruby circled by three diamonds.
The ring was rather small, in weight and fashion
More like a lady's than a gentleman's.
The ruby was quite large and rich with facets;
The diamonds too were of the purest water.

MUFFIE

What money did you have in notes and gold?

MEPHIE

Ten thousand dollars in large treasury notes,
And twenty sovereigns more in British gold.

MUFFIE

Describe the book and be particular.

MEPHIE

The body of it was embossed morocco;
The frame was gold with ornamental carvings;
Upon the clasp the giver had engraved
'O. Mephie'; that is a pet name of mine.

MUFFIE

I found a pocketbook upon this bench:
You have described it and its contents well
Except one thing: no name was on the clasp.

(Mephie stands a moment as if in thought, then takes from his pocket a magnifying glass.)

MEPHIE

Here, Sir, take this. Examine carefully:
If that name is not found upon the clasp
I make no claim; the portemonnaie is yours.

(Muffie steps aside and reads the name on the clasp; then, taking the ring from the pocketbook, he returns to Mephie.)

MUFFIE

Another proof: the last: try on the ring.

(Mephie puts on the ring; and with a gentle movement it drops from his finger; he then returns it to Muffie, who puts it into the pocketbook which he restores to Mephie.)

MUFFIE

Accept it, Sir; and I rejoice with you
Most heartily in its recovery.

MEPHIE

Name the reward and you shall have it, Sir.
The money value of my pocketbook
With all it holds to me is but a trifle.

MUFFIE

I claim your friendship, Sir; no more nor less.

MEPHIE

And that is yours: you have my love forever.

(They clasp hands; and in that act Mephie reveals himself.)

Muffie, my Bard: you see I know you well,
By Heaven's command I take a mortal friend,
And fancy I have made no great mistake
In choosing you; what say you to it, Muffie?

MUFFIE

My Guide, my Master and my Guardian Angel!

MEPHIE

All these indeed to you; and you for me
Will be a poet prophet to the world,
By those who know me not and love me not
I am called Mephistopheles the Wicked,
By loved ones Mephistopheles the Good,
Mephie or dear old Mephie if they please;
And as they know me you will find me ever,
In joy or sorrow gentle, thoughtful, true.
Why, think you, I have chosen you from all?

MUFFIE

I know not why; you have and I rejoice:
It is my life, my sweet foretaste of heaven.

MEPHIE

I tell you: I have always known you, Muffie,
A lover true, a dreamer and a singer
From early childhood, unrequited too
Yet not embittered, never envious,
But happy in the full reward of others:
For these I love you much. A holy angel
Made inquiry about my mortal friend;
I answered: in the Emporium of the West,
The Imperial Island City of the World,
Dwells a true poet without fame or fortune,
With little wisdom in the ways of men,
Still less in ways of women; and, in brief,
Of small account on earth: he is my choice.
The angel said: these are his very words:
Mephie, my dear, you might have done much worse:
I know him well: fool and philosopher,
Lowly and haughty, singing to himself,
The livelong day for want of audience.

MUFFIE

But to myself no more: my cup is full:
My time has come: angels will listen now.

MEPHIE

Softly, my Muffie: angels never heed
The vapouring of pride: that is for men.
The poets who gain audience in heaven,
Their numbers soar aloft on wing sublime,

Instinct with melody, and holy fire,
Replete with heart and soul: to such alone
Acceptance comes above: and even these,
Unless a guiding angel lead the way,
Will strive in vain to rise above the earth.

MUFFIE

Your pardon, Master. I perceive my fault:
I feel it too: your gentle reprimand
Will need no repetition: yet perhaps
The potent influence of supernal love
Upon my spirit may not be in vain;
And though my numbers are unworthy heaven
Some souls on earth may cherish them, and be
The happier and better for my song.

MEPHIE

Right nobly spoken, Muffie: yet again,
Why have I chosen you? I told you part
But not the whole: your vision is not bounded
By things material: it goes beyond
The world of nature to the spirit world,
And reads with larger, wiser faith than others
The unfolding mysteries of eternity:
Another reason too and not the least:
No slave are you to grovelling lust of gain:
There was my only doubt. While you supposed
Yourself the judge and me the suppliant
These was no secret purpose, no desire,
No act of soul however slight or brief,

Of yours that could escape my scrutiny;
And all were true: you triumph in my love.

MUFFIE

Thank gracious Heaven no demon tempted me!

MEPHIE

No demon comes unless you call him up.

MUFFIE

Had I belied your trust? had I been false?

MEPHIE

Ah, then, my Muffie, you had lost a treasure
More precious far than pelf: you would have slept
To wake, to look about and grieve in vain
For vanished wealth, to wonder how procedure
So relevant, so natural and clear
To every sense could only be a dream:
And brooding sad through long remorseful days
And sleepless nights could but evolve belief:
It was no dream; it was reality:
It was a test for some high consecration,
Some prize miraculous and rich from Heaven
That you had lost through vile cupidity.
With all regret, no hope in life nor death,
The dark foreboding years had borne you down
With ever deepening sorrow to the grave.

MUFFIE

That could not be: Heaven would not have it so.

MEPHIE

It must have been had you proved recreant.
Now, Muffie, what to you portends my love?

MUFFIE

I cannot tell: whatever it presages
Will be my hope, my happiness, my all.

MEPHIE

Well said, my Prophet true. My love betokens
A life above the plane of sordid men,
Their passions, purposes and low delights,
Hypocrisy and guile: my love betokens
Your call immediate and consecration
As Poet Prophet of this later day
Heaven's messenger to earth: my choice is final,
You know your duty and high destiny:
That duty hard finds recompense divine
In love celestial and high intercourse
With heaven below unknown to other men.

MUFFIE

Dear, holy Master, what can Muffie do
To merit such a call, such consecration?

MEPHIE

Nothing, my Prophet: from yourself to Heaven
Can be no merit; and from Heaven to you
Can be no debt: what needs Omnipotence?
Your highest worth is fitness to receive,
As angels do, divine beneficence.

MUFFIE

I know too well that in myself alone
I am as nothing: yet as poet prophet
Accredited I fondly hope my song
May not be found unworthy of your trust,
Nor die away upon the air unheard;
I hope indeed as you may give me voice
That men at last may listen to my numbers
And heed my prophecies; that, in the end,
My work for them all done, my spirit, freed
From union with mortality, may hear
Their prayers and blessings rise above my grave.

MEPHIE

Sublime in sentiment but false to fact.
When, Muffie, have you mortals paid your prophets
With honour and affection? Read the story.
From dawn of time the anointed poet seers
Have poured their spirits forth in sacrifice
To sacred duty, all to find themselves
Not loved, not praised, but execrated, cursed.
Men have not changed: the same will be your fate.

MUFFIE

While you approve I welcome any doom.

MEPHIE

My Prophet true, whatever fate may come,
What cruel fortune Earth may have in store,
Will bring you rich reward, for spirits blessed

Will be the messengers from heaven to you;
And ever in your darkest, saddest hours,
Though you may see them not, be well assured
They are about you still: they will not leave
The Poet Seer to faint and die alone.

MUFFIE

It is enough. Support me in my trials
For I am weak at best, that I may stand
Secure and faithful to my ordination.

MEPHIE

You will not fail me: I made no mistake:
Error is only mortal. Listen, Muffie:
Know you are heaven's appointed poet seer;
And so your life itself must be a poem,
Sublime, harmonious and beautiful
In every part. Now, Muffie dear, good night:
My love and blessing till we meet again.

MUFFIE

Good night, dear Master: love and sweet good night.

(Mephie disappears. Song of spirits in the air.)

SONG

(1)

Hearken, Poet: take the treasures toward thee winging;
Powers supernal in the pleasures of our singing,

While the conscious airs are sighing,
The enchanted hills replying
To the musick of our measures grandly ringing.

(2)

There the sacred constellation just returning
Will reward our expectation and our yearning:
From her stars divinely glowing,
Ever streaming, ever flowing,
Come the holy inspiration and the burning.

(Exit Muffie.)

CONCOURSE II

SCENE: Muffie standing in a wood near the Tappan Zee.
TIME: A rainy spring evening.

MUFFIE

I am unworthy: rank impiety
Transforms me utterly. And what am I
That Heaven shouted: honour me above my kind?
Nothing, mere nothing; yet I cannot bide
The Will Supreme: my will must govern all.
Bow, haughty spirit! turn! that way is death!
This way to hope and life! O now I feel
The sacred presence as I felt before,
And nature's witchery! In darkness here
The finer, purer sense is clear, and free
From all discordance of the visual world.
The low soft music of the falling rain
From leaf to leaf on these primeval oaks,
And ever varying as the zephyrs play,
Pervades my soul, enraptures me with sweetness:
It is the night. Impenetrable Night,
Queen Patroness of Poesy, you give
Imagination wing! Imperial Night,
Unseen upon your solitary throne,
Unknown, unloved, save by the votaries

Of song alone; your living harmonies,
Your visionary stores: the beautiful,
The gloomy and the grand, the terrible,
The weird and the fantastically wild,
All true to nature and the human heart,
Are showered upon your loyal worshipers
In rich munificence: and more than all
To me you bring a hope: perhaps even now
That hope may be fulfilled, and his dear voice
May cheer my soul again! Can this be dawn?
It is indeed, and I begin to see
The spreading arms of these gigantic oaks,
In shadowy sombre forms obscurely shown,
Like gruesome ghosts above me. O too late!
How quickly passed the night; the morning grows:
Hours fly like moments: in distracting hopes
And fears I lose all consciousness of time.
It is full day even now; all things are clear:
The very birds on that decaying pine
I plainly see: how strange, they are yet asleep.

(The Finto appears at a short distance from Muffie among the trees.)

But who is that? some early fisherman:
He seems confused and comes to speak with me.

THE FINTO

Good morning, Sir, I am a stranger here.
I lost my course in this deep tanglewood.
Could you direct me to the Hudson River?

MUFFIE

I can, Sir; and it will afford me pleasure
To be your company upon the way.

THE FINTO

I gratefully accept: how far is it?

MUFFIE

A little walk, no more: the path is yonder.

THE FINTO

I am a wanderer: I feel indeed
A spirit irresistible, some fate
Impel me onward. With no guide nor friend,
Except Old Nick and faithful Peter Pan
And ever ready pistol, I have gone
Through wilds unknown, and faced the hungry tiger
And lion in their haunts: more dreadful still,
The strangling snakes, pythons and boas huge,
And others, watchful and insidious,
Whose bite is death; and all was joy to me.

MUFFIE

Who were your friends, Old Nick and Peter Pan?

THE FINTO

A tame ichneumon pet was my Old Nick:
No other name would suit his qualities,
And Peter was a little terrier;
I think he never slept: no creature ever

Escaped his vigilance. Old Nick, in truth,
Was more than wonderful, so very small
My pocket sheltered him; and yet no reptile,
However powerful or venomous,
Could conquer him; and very few escaped;
You should have seen his exultation wild,
His demon dance upon a writhing foe.
He was protection from the only things
I ever dreaded. As for beasts of prey,
I have no fear of them. I call to mind
The instance of a tigress with her cubs:
The ground was open with no point of vantage
Nor tree at hand: she came on rapidly
Yet warily, her half-grown young behind.
The Indian summer sun was in my face;
And I bethought me of a schoolboy prank:
I took a pocket mirror in my hand,
And flashed the blazing sunlight in her eyes:
She veered a moment, saw her cubs, and then
Faced me again: I threw another flash:
She turned about completely, stood a moment,
Then, howling, trotted off. I might go on
With wild adventures, battles for my life,
Escapes miraculous; but that would savour
Of vanity to you, a total stranger.

MUFFIE

No, no, my friend: your story is a poem
Of wonder life in savage woods and jungles:
Enough cannot be told while more remains.

CONCOURSE II

THE FINTO

Politely spoken; but my chief delight
Was not among the natives of the wild:
Far up Andean, Himalayan heights
I found a dearer pleasure: I have stood
On Chimborazo's top for hours to see
The soaring condor circle round my head.
But even there was not my greatest joy:
Far nearer to my heart than all beside
I hold the noble rivers in their vales.
My days of early, happy manhood passed
In dreams along the storied streams of eld;
Then farther still, from utmost Orient
To Occident, wherever fancy led
And mighty rivers rolled, I made my home:
But one bright name as paragon of all
Was borne upon the air in every breeze;
And I have come from far-off eastern climes
To see this glory of the western world.

MUFFIE

You see it now: there spreads the Tappan Zee.

(Mephie appears standing near them on the shore.)

THE FINTO

Not half was told. There stands another stranger
All rapped in admiration like myself.

(Muffie rapidly approaches Mephie who embraces him affectionately.)

MUFFIE

My Guardian Angel and my Master dear!

MEPHIE

Yes, come again to my impatient child.

MUFFIE

No, not impatience but distrust of self,
Still whispering that I should never more
Behold the face nor hear the voice I loved.

MEPHIE

My Muffie, when I chose a mortal friend
I chose forever: set your heart at rest;
And know as well that many times I stand
Beside my poet prophet undisclosed.
Your comrade here, The Finto, and myself
Were at your side when your impassioned muse
Outdid herself in song to Empress Night:
Your rapture pleased us well. The Finto, Muffie,
Like me has known you long and loves you dearly:
Hold him forever as a favoured friend.

MUFFIE

Another angel friend! My heart is full!
But where are now Old Nick and Peter Pan,
And all those fearful creatures of the waste?

THE FINTO

They charmed our journey to the Master here,
My only purpose: yet the tale was true:

Not verbally indeed, but true to nature,
In harmony with nature's throbbing heart;
And such is truth itself and poesy.

MUFFIE

I deeply feel it so. Your friends and foes
Will ever live to me; and all remains
A glowing picture in my memory
Undying and unchanging as our love.

MEPHIE

Well spoken, Muffie. Poesy is kin
To the eternal melody that peals
Through nature, heaven and the human soul;
And those who clearly hear and render it
With inspiration are the bards divine:
Their measures rise to holy prophecy.
My pleasure boat lies moored in yonder cave,
The sail already spread: let us aboard,
And as we float, while friendship heightens all,
Enjoy the unrivalled beauties of the scene:
First well from shore then slowly down the stream.

MUFFIE

How curious: it is full day, and yet
The lights are burning upon either side,
The boats are all aglow: what can it mean?

MEPHIE

It means that day has come to you alone:
The sun still rides upon his eastward course

Far westward from the nadir: you yourself
A moment hence will greet your sombre queen.

MUFFIE

My light is fading slowly, rapidly:
Now all is dark: a miracle is done!

MEPHIE

Done for you, Muffie, for your happiness,
Done in our love: then let no faithless doubt
Assail your spirit when a trial comes.

MUFFIE

All doubt is dead; anxiety is dead:
My soul rests confident upon your love.

MEPHIE

There let it rest forever. Look above:
The sullen pall is rifted from the sky:
All heaven is radiant; and the fleecy waves
Are driven on before the western breeze
In strange, ethereal, silver-tinted forms:
A ceaseless change, a beauty still the same.

THE FINTO

It is not joy but ecstasy to gaze
On that serene unfathomable deep,
Lustrous with all its gems of molten gold,
Past which the human spirit just perceives
Her native realm of immortality.

MEPHIE

Yes, Finto, it is rapture for the soul
To leave the sordid nether world and soar
Upon poetic wing among the stars;
To revel there in beauty's charm supreme,
In all the majesty and mystery,
In all divine effulgence which, like love,
Pervades the empyreal infinite.

MUFFIE

Enchantment all. See where the rising moon
Fires all the eastern bank between those hills:
There glows her upper rim; and higher yet;
And now she throws her gleaming purple bar
From shore to shore across the Tappan Zee,
The moon is up: the bar is growing faint
And fainter still; by nature's sorcery
It has transformed into the undermoon
Among her stars lighting the under sky.
It is a fairy scene; and all the world
Where man is not is beautiful and good;
But he subverts the Sovereign Will and turns
Earth's fairest portions into solitudes.

MEPHIE

Man does great things, my Muffie, past a doubt;
But he cannot subvert the Sovereign Will:
Nay, stronger yet, no living soul can try.

MUFFIE

But there are men whose hard rapacity
And savage hate would make a demon blush:
What right have they to mar this lovely world?

MEPHIE

Again the same idea as before,
But clothed in different garb, more passionate.
Man has the power divine to rise or fall
By good or evil to his destiny:
It is the touchstone of the human soul.
Yet many falling souls appear to rise
Upon perfidious wing: leave them to Heaven:
Supernal justice holds the balance true,
And never sleeps: no subterfuge avails:
They build their dwelling in a desert place,
Afar from love, afar from light and hope,
To die in desolation and despair.

MUFFIE

But can it be? can the Omnipotent
Still live and love and suffer them forever?

MEPHIE

He suffers all: enough for us to know:
Enough for you, my Muffie, Charity
Benignant, beautiful, daughter of Love,
Angel of Mercy, Patroness of Earth,
And heaven's favorite, sweet Charity.

MUFFIE

My love, my trust, my troth are hers forever!

THE FINTO

Stout words; and yet if Lady Charity
Were now your plighted lover, liable
To human ills and passions, she would feel
More lonely than a solitary dove
Ere time and frost have turned your maple leaves.

MUFFIE

No, Finto, no; the poet's heart is true.

THE FINTO

His heart is true: our love betokens that,
And more, much more: a soul attuned for song,
And radiant with light of prophecy.

MEPHIE

Our love must be the prophet's only meed,
His one defence: at war against the world
He will not stand alone. Look toward the right:
What mighty mountain walls confront the moon,
Reflecting all their changing lights and shades,
And all their varied grandeur in her beams.

MUFFIE

The vale descends in transformation wild
And beautiful past these eternal heights.

THE FINTO

What glare is that upon the southern sky?

MUFFIE

The city's light: we see it faintly here;
More clearly here; and here in all its glory.

MEPHIE

Your pride is yonder, Muffie: am I right?

MUFFIE

Yes, truly so; and yet I can but feel
In sober moments more of grief than pride.

MEPHIE

Why grieve? Your city stands alone, supreme.

MUFFIE

Supreme in wealth and all material things.

MEPHIE

But those are good: for man upon the earth
Material blessing and rewards are good.

MUFFIE

But not alone. Man is not all for time:
He owes himself to immortality.
In that magnificent emporium
Of wealth and vice how many pay the debt?

MEPHIE

True; yet among its denizens are men
And women too of consecrated lives.

We ever find in mighty multitudes
The good and evil joined in high degree:
Look only toward the good and be the good:
What more can angels do? As for the men
Whose mad rapacity is unappeased
By all your city's wealth: they are the growth
Of ignorance, venality and vice
Where every human beast is autocrat,
And bears the sceptre of imperial power.
But let the greedy grovel: not for them
We ride the waters of this glorious bay:
We have a higher, holier purpose here:
Our prophet has a prophet's work tonight.
Look, listen: tell us what you see and hear
Of good or evil import to the world.

MUFFIE

I see a company of men and women.
By execration and wild argument
They assail all laws of man, all laws divine,
All sacred things, and even Omnipotence,
In cause of love and human liberty.

MEPHIE

Portentous omen, Muffie: be alert.

MUFFIE

A woman rises to profound applause:
Brothers and sisters of our noble band,
Our life must be a sacrifice to love:
Not love of husband, wife, parent or child,

Nor any other selfish cruel love,
But love of liberty, equality;
A love of man and woman everywhere;
A universal, all-pervading love.
Why is the world a place of misery?
The blight of cruel law is over all:
We are enslaved, that is the reason why.
King Mammon's men heap treasures for themselves
By plundering the rest: they call it gain
And rightful profit: so indeed it is
By laws of tyranny. What need of law?
What need of wealth if love were all in all?
What right have I to affluence while my brother
Wears out a life of hopeless penury
In unremitting, all-degrading toil?
The day is due: the day is coming fast
When all the favorites of wealth and power
Will feel that we can hate as well as love:
When that day comes, and I may live to see it,
We will dethrone their king omnipotent,
Destroy his priests and all the vampires too
That suck the toilers' blood: then will the world
Be fairer, happier than their fabled heaven!
She seats herself: a man is next to rise:
My cherished Friends, Sisters and Brothers true,
In all essential principles and aims
We are the same: we all hate equally
The powers of superstition, wealth and law;
And all the selfish, cruel family ties
Indissolubly bound in league with them:

We hate the toil, the misery and crime
That spring from them: the least is odious:
But brotherly equality and love,
And their two children, peace and happiness,
Are dear to us: these are our principles:
But when we go beyond and ask ourselves
The way to crush those giant tyrannies,
Then answers will be various, and few
Appropriate and sure. One thing is clear:
The Brotherhood must act in harmony:
No disunited forces can prevail
Against united foes: remember too,
Armies and navies are oppression's tools:
Oppose them everywhere. The patriot's cry
Is but the refuse from a barbarous age.
We have no country and no countrymen
Except the Brotherhood: we stand alone,
Our light must shine on all, especially
Upon all youth; and more especially
Upon the youth of poverty and want.
In early years the mind receives and holds
With readiness and pertinacity:
Impress it then with love of liberty
And hate of tyranny: it never changes.
Each one of us is freedom's messenger.
Disseminate the truth and sow good seed
At every turn of opportunity:
That is our duty now; and all as one,
Tireless and vigilant we must go on
With secret circumspection to our end.

The poor will see their rights and wrongs at last:
That is the time: Our time has come to strike.
Oppression's myrmidons will not submit
Without a deadly conflict: that is plain:
Be theirs the consequence. The tyrant's blood
Is welcome sacrifice to liberty!
He sits: an old man rises in his place:
Sisters and Brothers in fraternity,
Each comrade works in his peculiar way
For love and liberty: my way is death.
The primal socialist: death equals all.
No pride of wealth and power infests the grave:
Men are all brothers, women sisters there.
Above all else the never sleeping dread
Of retribution is a moral force:
It gives our rulers an abiding sense
Of their mortality and brotherhood,
Could I prevent it not a man in power
Would live to see another rising sun.
The tyrant's hand is on us day and night:
But love will rule at last and rule forever
When all oppression, toil and penury
Are washed from Earth in blood. My way is death!
The old man seats himself; a woman rises.

MEPHIE

It is enough: now learn the dark portent:
In all those tones you heard a single voice;
In all those passions ruled one sombre spirit

With baleful aim: the Demon of Destruction,
Malign and sinister engendered all.

MUFFIE

But Heaven will avert the blight he sends.

MEPHIE

And Heaven alone can do it. Know that toil,
Toil patient, arduous, continuous,
Is price of every good; that human souls
Can only rise upon laborious wing,
That souls at ease in idleness must fall,
That heaven itself is labour. Close your eyes.

(Muffie closes his eyes.)

The scene has changed: his ominous words are deeds.
Look well about: note all you see and hear.

(Muffie opens his eyes and looks about.)

MUFFIE

The sun shines brightly in the eastern sky;
Soft breezes fan our sails, but all is gloom.
These glancing waters lost among their isles,
Where erstwhile rode the navies of the world,
Are all uncumbered now, all desolate
Save where some lofty, solitary mast,
Above the surface points to wreck below.
But here alone is death: in every part
The city throbs with ardent life and passion.

Throughout the length of all her populous ways
Wild men and frenzied women press along
In ever changing, intermingling throngs:
Eager, tumultuous, the surging hordes
Of mad humanity press on and on.
Aloft above the high cloud-piercing domes,
On wide extended, animated wings,
Airships are circling gracefully and slow:
Upon all groups of proud commercial piles,
Upon all structures consecrate to Heaven,
To nature, beauty, truth and poesy,
To wisdom, justice and humanity,
To treasures of the ages gathered up,
The circling vessels from above look down
Like guardian angels on their holy work.
In every edifice below the ships
Lie captives bound: men, women, children, all
Bound cruelly together; and without
Collect the multitudes: and still they come;
And still their passions and the tumult grow.
Cheering and malediction strike my ear
In harrowing unison. From every side
Mad declarations, execrations fierce,
Hopes, loves and hates are borne upon the air,
Their god is dead, rings out a woman's voice,
And they shall follow him! All yet alive
Both old and young shall follow him to death!
They are contamination! they must die!
And thence away another voice resounds:
King Mammon's rule is past: he is no more:

Of all his followers and favorites
A few remain to glorify this day:
Their time has come: not one shall see tomorrow:
Their life would blight ours. Tyranny is dead!
Love, trust, benignity and happiness
Rule every heart! King Mammon is no more!
The routs look up; and suddenly I see
A great white banner given to the breeze
On all the ships above: On every one
I read the motto in gilt characters:
Love, Liberty, Equality and Peace,
With Happiness for All. At sight of this
Loud cheers ring out from all the myriads there,
Continuous and rising till the sky
Itself reverberates; then silence deep
Throughout the city. Now a ship propels
A purple fireball on the pile below:
One echoing roar, and that great structure lies
A shapeless mass. Faster than I can note
The fireballs dart, the thunder blasts resound,
The structures crumble on their prisoners:
And still no end. Its deadly work well done,
Each vessel is brought down from upper air
And left beside a ruin. Fires break out:
The frantic men and women spread the flames
While all continuous thunders rend the air;
And as the towers transcendent crash to earth
The very waters tremble under us.
An airship circling right before our boat
Sends down its blazing messenger of doom

Upon a pile built for eternity,
And one re-echoing tremendous blast
Benumbs me: that proud structure is no more;
And all its mighty skeleton of steel,
Distorted, shivered in unnumbered parts,
Lies piecemeal, like the rest, above the dead.
The incessant roar recedes on every side
Fast followed by the flames. Impetuous throngs,
Transported by demoniac delight,
Are feeding still the wide extending fires:
High voices too, almost as terrible,
Resound in concert with the thunder roll:
The war is done! the victory is won!
Our blood is on their heads and they shall die!
They killed the Brotherhood! Revenge is ours!
The world is ours for love and liberty!
More faintly now the multitudes appear;
And still more faintly, all like shadowy forms
Around the flames: the fires themselves grow dim.
The sun is lost behind the deadly pall.
Now earth herself is rent: in every part
On land and water lurid flames burst forth,
Quick flashing through the darkness, and our boat
Seems helpless, tossed upon the heaving waves.
Those flames are dead and all is dark again:
No sense of aught but clamours far and near,
The quaking and the unbroken roll of death!
My spirit faints: sleep overpowers me.

(Muffie sleeps.)

CONCOURSE II

MEPHIE

Rouse, Muffie, Prophet: there is more to come.

(Muffie wakes.)

MUFFIE

I never heard one solitary moan!

MEPHIE

All that was long ago: the world has changed,
And man has changed since then. What see you,
Muffie?

MUFFIE

I see a dismal ruin everywhere,
Like the great city: is it possible?
Has all her wealth and glory come to this?

MEPHIE

Yes, Muffie; see: our mooring is unchanged:
That dismal ruin is your Island Queen:
But she is not alone: on all your land,
In both Americas save far away
Among the tribes of north and south extremes,
And in the west where Asia dominates,
The curse of desolation is the same.
Note everything, hold it in memory
For Heaven will require it all from you.

MUFFIE

Where towers majestic stood in lofty pride
I only see the gloomy heaps of death
And crumbling walls where things repulsive dwell

In loathsome intercourse. Her thoroughfares
That overflowed with life and solitudes,
And ravines mark her subterranean ways.
Large trees have grown: the city is a wild:
No mortal life except strange men and women
Delving among the ruins earnestly:
Their simple dress is coarse white woollen stuff:
Jacket and overalls and sheepskin shoes,
The wool side in, complete the garb for both.
The men have full long beard and flowing hair,
Thrown back with various feather ornaments:
The women's hair, cut short, is unadorned.
A large crossbow with complement of arrows
Is borne upon the back by all alike:
Their rich rewards are stored in little boats
Moored safe along the shore. We are moving off:
The scene is changed: the ruins fade away.

MEPHIE

Yes, we are leaving them: let nothing pass.

MUFFIE

A few small boats are gliding up or down.
On either side I see a forest deep.
At various intervals by living water
Are open fields with structures built of logs
Where desperate souls with simple arms combine
To battle primal nature and her brood
Of savage beasts for life and livelihood.
All signs of human life are near the river:
The unbroken, dismal forest lies beyond.

CONCOURSE II

MEPHIE

Our boat will rest awhile: note carefully.

MUFFIE

In open fields upon a rivulet
I see two strong log buildings like the rest:
One ruder and much larger than the other:
Between the buildings and the river side
A woman cultivates a field of maize:
Nearer the river is a half-grown boy
With hounds and shepherds herding animals.
Beyond the buildings at the forest edge
A mounted man appears with pack of hounds:
Upon his back a large crossbow and quiver;
On his left side, from his right shoulder slung,
Is a long spear with iron dagger point:
His bearing proud, alert, and firm hard face,
Bespeak a man prepared to grapple death;
He looks about upon his wife and son,
And on the strong log cabin nearer by
That holds a daughter with three smaller children,
And two great mastiffs, his most precious wealth;
He then peers earnestly into the forest
And gives the word: his hounds have disappeared:
Their deep long calls recede on every side;
And while he listens it is plain he knows
The different meanings of their various bays.
Facing the wild with eye and ear intent,
Without a motion and without a sound,
He sits for moments; then his loud shrill cry

Reaches the river side. On ready steeds,
With their good bows and quivers, mother and son
Ride to the fold and climb two hickories.
The man himself with shepherd dogs and hounds
Drives on his animals relentlessly.
The wiser horses know their danger well,
And guide themselves to safety with all speed;
The silly flock is far more difficult,
And moves reluctant. In the forest far
Wild howls reverberate. The hounds appear
And bound off swiftly: at their master's side
They join the shepherds, and the wayward flock
Is moving faster. Nearer than before
The howls are echoing: nearer, louder yet
They rise and fall in horrid unison.
A wolf comes out upon the forest skirt
Followed by five or six; and then by scores;
And then by hundreds they are gathering,
And howling as they gather and advance
Upon their scented prey, fast reinforced
By those behind: and still the woods resound.
The flock begins to see its danger now,
And moves on willingly, almost too late:
The hungry beasts press on: the woman's bow
Restrains the leaders for a single moment:
That precious moment sees the flock in fold,
Fast followed by the shepherds and the hounds.
With one quick motion the strong door is closed,
And all are safe,—all but the horse and rider.
The wolves are close upon their prey. The man

Has but a single hope: to reach an oak
Two leaps in front with branches near the ground:
The first is quickly made; but after that
The fight for life is desperate and slow:
Surrounded all by savage enemies,
Further advancement seems impossible.
Torn, bleeding from all parts but unsubdued,
The horse yet struggles: upright on his back
The man deals death among the furious brutes:
The woman's bow too loosens many a hold.
From lightning thrusts in front the wolves at length
Give way a little; and one effort more,
The noble, faithful animal's last, succeeds:
Before he falls the man has grasped a bough
And drawn himself to safety in the tree
With all his armament. The horse below
Is brought to earth among his ravenous foes
While hundreds more flock in to join the feast
At every moment; but the woods are still.
The horse is covered by the raging pack
Deep over him that tear his quivering flesh,
And tear each other in their furious greed.
Now from the house, in answer to the wolves,
I hear the deep low growling of the mastiffs,
Slow pacing round. Safe on his bough the man,
Wielding the spear, exacts a savage life
At every instant; and so rapidly
The dripping weapon flashes in the sun
I hardly follow it; and yet the wolves
Perceive no danger and heed not their foe:

But while they gorge the fatal work goes on,
The heaps of death increase. As numbers dwindle
The cruel cowards feel their punishment,
And circle round with howls of rage and fear:
Some slowly steal away. The spear slung back,
With certain aim the crossbow takes its place
Till but a solitary shaft remains:
A single shaft is kept in every quiver
For dire necessity. Of all the pack
Only a score are left. The man now calls:
Let Lion out, Noree, let Terron out:
And out they bound and straight among the wolves:
With strength and courage irresistible
They throw their enemies to left and right.
Dispirited and silent now the wolves
Are driven toward the forest in retreat:
But danger still assails, for while they go
A panther clears the wood: large, terrible,
And lithe and beautiful as terrible,
Right on he leaps: his eye is on the boy.
With one great bound he darts far up the tree
And crouches back before the fatal spring.
By terror overcome the boy shoots wild,
The crossbow dropping from his trembling hand:
He almost falls: but mother's eye is there:
Her solitary iron-pointed shaft
Goes quivering through the vitals of the beast.
His thirst for human blood quenched in his own,
The stricken creature rapidly descends:
He trots off slowly, gnashing at the shaft

Until he falls: he rises, gnashing still,
And staggers on; then falls to rise no more.
The father, mother and son are on the ground;
But she whose nerves erstwhile were steel refined
Now totters while she walks. We move again.
The battle scene is passed. Upon the left
Are open fields with buildings tenantless:
No sign of life except a prowling bear:
Those fade away; and here the shore recedes
On either side, while far apart I see
The lonely homes of hardy foresters.

MEPHIE

We rest again. Look down into the water
And read the holy secrets of the deep.

(Muffie looks into the water.)

MUFFIE

Daylight has faded, and the under sky
Is radiant with under moon and stars.

(Muffie looks upward and about.)

Above, about, appear in all their glory
The effulgent heavens and the Tappan Zee.

MEPHIE

Right nobly done: my every hope fulfilled.
I greet you and commend you heartily.
Think not my love subjected you to see

The terrors of Destruction and her child,
Gaunt Desolation, horrid as they are,
Without high purpose, great necessity:
But much remains: what you have seen and heard
And clearly told to us you must repeat
To all the world: mortals perchance will heed
And so escape: if not, your part is done.

MUFFIE

My Master dear, what you have shown to me
The world shall have from me, and vividly
As with your aid I can embody it.

MEPHIE

Well said, my Prophet. Finto, if you please,
Dismiss high thoughts of mortal destiny,
And crown this beauty with the charm of song.

THE FINTO
(Singing.)

(1)

Now the moon is riding high,
And the zephyrs faintly sigh
In her maiden light so pure and free;
And our hearts and drawing nigh
In a love that cannot die
As we float upon the Tappan Zee.

(2)

All the skies above us beam;
All the mirrored mountains gleam;

All the glowing waters dance in glee;
And its beauties ever seem
Only heaven in a dream
While we float upon the Tappan Zee.

(3)

O the all-enchanting might!
It is glory rare and bright
Where no thought of darksome earth can be.
In the far celestial light
We will dwell upon the night
When we floated on the Tappan Zee.

MUFFIE

Finto, the sense of terror is no more:
Sweet calm and happiness pervade my soul.

MEPHIE

Our sail is over. Let us all to shore.
Muffie, my Poet Prophet, kind farewell.
Our love and all this lovely scene will be
A fond remembrance till we meet again.

THE FINTO

Farewell, dear Muffie: you are ever near.

MEPHIE

Dear Master, Finto dear, farewell, farewell!

(They go to shore. Mephie and The Finto disappear. Exit Muffie.)

CONCOURSE III

SCENE: Olin's Vale. A clear brook runs down the centre from north to south. On either side the hill is covered with magnolias, live oaks, elms, hickories, hollies, vines and wild flowers. Muffiie is slowly sauntering up the valley and enjoying its beauties.

TIME: A beautiful summer morning.

MUFFIE

Alone with beauty: not a sight nor sound
Incongruous breaks the charm. These drooping elms
And live oaks draped in waving silvery moss,
These rich magnolias, lofty hickories,
These lowly hollies clothed in lustrous green,
This varied carpeting of blooms and vines,
This clear stream, winding round its roots and rocks
In pebbled rippling shoals or eddying deeps,
All form a scene to soothe the troubled heart
And captivate the soul. How like a vision
This tiny bird darts round from flower to flower
And feeds upon the wing: and such a wing,
In lightning play all imperceptible:
Now, like a very bullet in the air,
Beyond the power of sight he shoots away.

(Leora appears at a little distance above Muffie, looking up the stream.)

But who is this companion of my pleasure?
A woman formed in woman's loveliness;
Her face away: she seems enrapt, and heeds
Naught but the nature she is worshiping:
Her waving auburn hair, with ribbon bound
But scarce confined, half circles all her waist.
She turns about and yet I am unseen:
The birds and flowers are all in all to her,
And she to me is radiance of heaven.
The graceful dome, half shown and half concealed;
The large dark eyes whence all her soul beams forth;
Her cheek of olive with its crimson blended,
Changes with every change of thought and feeling.
Under its porch of delicate sensuous beauty
Her exquisite, full, double arched upper lip,
Fits like the petal of a budding rose
Upon the sweetly pouting nether twin.
She sees me now and looks inquiringly

LEORA

Is this the poet, William Wallace Muffie?

MUFFIE

Yes, Madam, I am William Wallace Muffie.

LEORA

Two valued friends of ours were passing by,
And saw you walking in the vale below.

MUFFIE

Two friends of mine? and yet I never saw them.

LEORA

Your eye was on a humming bird just then.

MUFFIE

Ah, that explains: while he was playing there
The world was blank to me. Where are our friends?

LEORA

Under the oaks above the waterfall:
They wait me there. If I should come alone
It would be great displeasure to them both.

MUFFIE

Then I will follow; but were you of earth
Or I of heaven you should not go alone.

LEORA

There glowed the poet. We will go together.

MUFFIE

I cannot thank you; your sweet gracious words
Beggar all merit and all thanks of mine.

LEORA

I need no thanks: I am the poet's friend.

MUFFIE

So great a prize for me? Can it be true?

LEORA

It is indeed: our friends have told me all:
And who more worthy friendship than the poet,

Although it rarely ever comes to him?
The oaks are near: there rolls the waterfall;
But I could linger hours along this brook
Nor lose one moment. See those graceful elms,
Half hidden by their pendent mossy veils;
And there, again, your sweetheart and my own,
Dear little fairy of the feathered world,
Careers among the flowers in all his glory:
It seems to me the very fairest flowers
Bow low in reverence to his sovereign beauty,
The while resounds his low, sweet monotone,
The soothing drone of wings invisible.
Now there he lights upon the honeysuckle;
That slender, waving honeysuckle spray;
How gracefully he swings before the breeze
While every colour rich and luminous
Blazes upon his iridescent coat.
Again upon the wing among the flowers,
Before a favourite, the lowly phlox:
There like a spirit vanishes. Farewell!
Supernal beauty on the earth, farewell!

MUFFIE

He may return: he will: they always do.

LEORA

We dare not tarry. What rare music swells
From that lone hickory below the fall.
The prince of feathered songsters, hidden there,
In notes ethereal, all vanquishing,

Proclaims defiance to the woodland world;
And here another takes the challenge up
In this magnolia, holding doubtful too
On even poise the high supremacy,
While ever-changing marvellous melody
Charms the live air and overflows the vale.
This brook is dear to me: the native home
Of song and beauty is a holy place.
Here is the fall. Now up this valley side;
There are the oaks, and there our friends await us.

(Mephie and The Finto are seen standing in a small grove of live oaks above the fall: Muffie and Leora join them: they greet Muffie affectionately.)

MEPHIE

This is Leora, Muffie: hold her dear
For she has loved the poet long and well.

MUFFIE

I knew she could not be a mortal maid:
She has too much of heaven: my heart is hers.

THE FINTO

Alas, alas, poor Lady Charity!

LEORA

No tears for Madam Charity, my Finto:
She needs no sympathy: it is her nature,
Her special privilege, her very life
To pour a soothing balm in every wound
Without reward, without even gratitude.

THE FINTO

And ever, too, almost a hopeless task,
With ardent ingenuity she strives
To infuse her spirit in the human soul.

MUFFIE

Mammon rules there supreme while Charity,
Like some obtrusive suppliant for alms,
Unknown, distrusted, gets a cold rebuff.

THE FINTO

Not Mammon only: other demons joined
In friendly rivalry hold hideous riot.

MUFFIE

What desecration of her holiness!

MEPHIE

She calls them in else Heaven would not permit:
But think not, Muffie, that a soul debauched
Defeats the Sovereign Will: she sells indeed
Her high celestial birthright for a mess
Of deadly pottage here; and, like the fruit
Blighted in bloom, falls withering to earth.
Have no disturbing doubt: Omnipotence
Rules all, guides all throughout infinity
And all eternity; by finite minds
Inscrutable and inexpressible,
Save as the Father's love reveals itself.
His filial spirits in all times and climes

Have cherished and returned that love supreme:
Their names are stars in heaven's bright firmament:
Prophets and poets, all who loved and gave
Their life to man and immortality.

MUFFIE

In all that infinite of light and glory
The brightest star is named for Avon's Bard.

(Mephie walks up the vale and disappears.)

THE FINTO

That name and fame are mythical, my Muffie
Lord Francis Bacon was the real poet,
The true creator of Macbeth and Lear.

MUFFIE

Ah, Finto, Finto, it is all too late
To wrench the laurel crown from Shakespeare's brow;
He did the work as he alone could do it,
And won his immortality too well.

THE FINTO

As you suppose; but in the cause of truth
Put by all prejudice for just one moment,
And let us reason soberly together.
Compare the men. We see in Francis Bacon
The very man whom all the world would honour
As true and sole creator of those dramas
Had they come nameless from his age to yours.
In time of good Queen Bess and Scottish James

The playwright's office laboured under ban:
It would have blighted Bacon's fondest hopes;
And hence he chose an actor manager
To stand as author of his noble works
And put them on the stage: give me one reason,
If one you have, why this may not be true:
Nay, stronger, why it is not probable.

MUFFIE

No, Finto, Avon's Bard, not Francis Bacon,
Is our immortal poet dramatist.

THE FINTO

That answer is the reason of a woman,
Not a philosopher as Muffie is.

LEORA

I have a reason pertinent, sufficient,
Though Muffie and yourself may both dislike it,
To prove that Francis Bacon neither did
Nor ever could achieve our Shakespeare's work.

THE FINTO

Shoot quick: expectancy is on the wing.

LEORA

Lord Bacon was not mean enough by half.

THE FINTO

What, what, Leora, not half mean enough?

LEORA

Precisely so, and not half bad enough:
He could not give what he did not possess:
Nothing from nothing, Finto, as you know.

THE FINTO

Leora, that is worse than Muffie's reason,
It is the very bedlam of a reason.
The great creations of the poet's mind
Are far above himself, beside himself.

LEORA

Finto, there is a modicum of truth,
No more, in what you say. Fecundity
And not creative genius is the gift
Which consecrates the poet for his work.
The procreative spirit of poesy
Hovers the poet with celestial power,
Life-giving power: then inspiration reigns;
And from his spirit issuing are born
Immortal offspring to enchant the world.
I speak of that diviner poesy
Which thrills from heart to heart, from soul to soul,
And peals from earth to heaven. The progeny
Are living semblance of the parent spirit,
For like from like is lasting ordinance:
Alike and yet in strange variety.
Lord Francis Bacon is a thing of earth:
He never soars: the procreative spirit
Never wooed his, not for a single moment;

Not even by the flashing of a glance:
But if he had, as I have said before,
The jurist was not bad enough: his soul
Could never bear for us the two Macbeths,
Don John, Iago, Edmund, Goneril,
And more in glorious odium with them,
The full blown roses of iniquity,
That bloom perennial in Shakespeare's garden.
Compared with those your marvel so renowned
For infamous perversion of the laws,
His craven cringe in Lady Hatton's case,
And all his peculations and his bribes,
Dwindles to plain respectability.

MUFFIE

But that defames the myriad-minded bard.

LEORA

No, Muffie; you are wrong: twice wrong, indeed:
The Bard of Avon was not myriad-minded,
And he is not defamed: his single mind,
Bright as the sunbeams in its lightning play,
Illuminates this lower world of yours,
And almost reaches heaven. His faculties,
His clear perception and imagination,
Are but the servants of his inspiration,
Attending maidens that obey her will.
But if our poet had unnumbered minds,
And every mind an angel's, even then
Could all with all their powers create a Regan:

Create a very Regan as she is,
Alive and flushed with all her deviltry?
Failure complete and ignominious
Had crowned the hopeless effort: she was born,
Heart of his heart and spirit of his spirit;
And so she lives forever in our hate.
But rest assured whatever we may feel
Of love, hate, pity, sympathy or mirth,
Each true-born child of his received from him
The full outpourings of parental love.
The quality most strange in Avon's Bard
Is not his mind, imagination's world,
Nor even his inspiration all divine:
The multifarious nature of our poet
Makes him the greatest human miracle:
Thence comes a progeny so various
In all the qualities of good and evil;
And all so full of real life, and all
Identical with nature's very self.

THE FINTO

Resolve us, dear Leora, if you please,
What part of Shakespeare's nature was infused
Into his wild repulsive Caliban.

LEORA

A clever pass, my Finto: I commend you,
In Caliban we see your grain of truth:
Like others who subserve a passing purpose
He is a creature of the imagination;

He is a pure creation, not a birth:
But yet in him the poet shows himself,
His inmost feelings, rarest thing of all:
He execrates a vice predominant,
Nor ever slips an opportunity
To show it true and make it odious;
And in the son of Madam Sycorax
He deals the hated vice a deadly thrust.

MUFFIE

It is too strange and wonderful for truth.

LEORA

What is most wonderful remains untold:
His spirit has all delicate qualities
Of woman's too; and hence we ever find
That his are nature's women, every one,
Not men trapped off in feminine attire:
Even that detested creature, Cloten's mother,
Like Imogen, the angel at her side,
Is woman first and last in thought and feeling.

MUFFIE

I cannot answer yet cannot believe.

LEORA

Muffie, why not believe? Among the great
The very greatest are our poet's peers
For inspiration and imagination;
But in the power occult, miraculous,
That peoples earth with living men and women

How circumscribed they are: he stands alone,
And seems like nature all unlimited.
Why not believe? Doubt were credulity.

MUFFIE

I do believe: doubt is impossible.

LEORA

At last, dear Muffie. What say you, my Finto?

THE FINTO

Muffie has answered you. In argument
I never could maintain my cause against you.

LEORA

And, Finto mine, be sure you never will.

MUFFIE

Where is the master? Will he come again?

THE FINTO

Yes, certainly: he never leaves a friend
Without farewell. He has a work to do:
His prophet will be weary when we part.

(Mephie appears, walking down the vale with a strange spirit in feminine attire at his side. As they draw near, The Finto and Leora salute her. She fixes her eyes upon Muffie with an expression of deep affection and sadness.)

MEPHIE

She loves you, Muffie, with celestial love:
It is Unone: have you ever seen her?

MUFFIE

I never saw that sweet, sad face before.

MEPHIE

Never before? Are you quite certain, Muffie?

MUFFIE

Yes, I am very sure: that countenance,
Those lustrous eyes whence inspiration beams,
If ever seen could never be forgotten.

MEPHIE

And yet they are forgotten: many a time
Your head has lain upon her loving breast
While tears and kisses mingled on your cheek.
Beyond all mortal poets of today
We love you, Muffie; but take this from me:
The dower divine that you received from her
Was richer, purer in its parent spirit.
Her hope was high, but life and hope were doomed:
Ere blooming May had ripened into June
Her opening flower was nipped and all was lost:
All lost to earth, but what the angels love

Is never lost to heaven. Go up to her;
Receive a mother's kiss and fond embrace:
She may not speak, except a short farewell.

(Muffie goes up to Unone: she embraces and kisses him, and looks affectionately into his face.)

UNONE

My child, my wandering son! farewell, farewell!

(Unone releases Muffie, turns and disappears.)

MEPHIE

Muffie, my Poet, you are well requited
For man's indifference: you have received
By special favour precious boons from heaven
Rarely vouchsafed before: it is for you
To justify that favour and my choice;
And I am sure you will. But heed this truth:
Poets and prophets while upon the earth
Do not belong to earth: they live apart:
They are wayfarers in a stranger land,
The messengers from far celestial realms,
With little share or profit in the good
Which comes to natives here; and you, my Muffie,
Are one of them; one in your inspiration,
One in your aspiration and your trust,
One in your labours, your discouragements

And sorrows, yet my Poet Prophet's crown
Is richer than a ducal coronet.
It is the hour the miracles are doing.
Survey the valley: tell us what appears.

(Muffie surveys the vale toward the north and south.)

MUFFIE

The vale is natural upon the south,
But on the north is transformation strange:
I only see a boundless waste of waters.

MEPHIE

And is that all a solitary waste?

MUFFIE

It is not all: perpetual change occurs;
A mist obscures, and I can just perceive
A shadowy, distant shore. The air grows clear;
And full before my sight with all her isles,
Her lofty headlands, her projecting capes,
Her deep extended sinuous gulfs and bays,
Her mighty mountains, all continuous,
Her vales distinct, walled in on every side,
Her wrecks of beauty unapproachable,
Her battlefields of sacred memory,
The realm of Hellas rises from the ocean.

MEPHIE

Go on, my Prophet. What appears in Hellas?

MUFFIE'S PROPHECY

MUFFIE

Extreme commotion rages everywhere.
All Hellas is arrayed against herself:
One part opposes personal possession
And every other individual right:
That part attacks all law, divine and human,
Religion and all sacred family ties:
Its battle-cry is 'Love and Liberty
With Absolute Equality for All.'
The other party has no battle-cry:
It stands for law, religion and the home,
And rights of persons as they were of old.
The hardy sons of mountain fastnesses
Retain those rights entire; but from the rest
Some have been wrenched away; and what remain
Are greatly circumscribed and little worth.
Athenæ has an open gathering
Of men and women from the aggressive side.
A legislator in that interest
Has risen to address his partisans:
Sisters and Brothers in our noble cause,
My record lies before you: I may say
That I do not expect your full approval:
The little progress made by legislation
Toward Love and Liberty has not my own.
We are not altogether blamable:
Our way was difficult, as all must know
Who ever tried by legislative means
To advance the cause of Love and Liberty.
Our enemies, astute, unscrupulous,

With all the aid that tyranny could give,
With all the weapons traitor hands could wield,
Defended point by point with some success:
And yet our labour was not profitless:
The university and all museums,
Those artful panders to the pride of caste,
Have been closed up; and, more important still,
Our teachers and ours only are employed
In all the schools of primary degree.
Upon my motion we proposed a law
To disencumber the Acropolis,
And use all rock that now obstructs the height
For lime and building stones to house the people.
We passed it, but the creature called the king
Withheld approval from our generous measure,
And put his mercenaries on that hill,
The hated shrine of haughty privilege,
The one museum that is open yet.
Let me remind you, friends: two years ago
The army was abolished: my own vote
Was in the negative, and you yourselves
Were hard against me for it: I was right:
The army then was ours in sympathy,
In our control at reasonable cost:
How is it now? Traitors in Asia
Supply the means; the tyrant hires the men,
All mountaineers and enemies of ours:
That one mistake has cost us years of labour
But no discouragement. Our every move
Is in advance: we take no backward step.

Our victory is sure; and when it comes
Our enemies will pay its price in full!
He sits: a woman rises in reply:
Brothers and Sisters in equality
And universal love, I need not tell you
How much we owe our brother: you all know it:
The universal gratitude of Hellas
Is less than he deserves; and yet with him
I cry in bitterness, how slow the pace
Of progress toward the Brotherhood of Man!
And what appears is oft illusory.
By closing up the university
And all museums we have not advanced:
That is illusive progress: nothing more:
Closed up indeed: they should have been blown up:
That would have settled up their whole account:
But closed up may be opened up again.
The churches, most pestiferous of all,
Stand open wide with bold effrontery:
The time is far: we still have much to do!
The woman sits. The meeting fades away.
The waters rise; the land sinks rapidly:
Only the mountains are above the waters,
And those are settling: they have disappeared,
And all is water, ocean everywhere.

MEPHIE

Are you quite sure? Search all points carefully:
Some distant island may perhaps be found.

MUFFIE

Yes, in the far-off east appears a land
Approaching us, it seems: it surely is
Nearer and nearer: now the British Isles
Lie right before us here, an open scroll.

MEPHIE

My Prophet, read the scroll: leave nothing out.

MUFFIE

It tells a tale of terror past belief,
A story of destruction past all hope.
In all its countless hives of industry
No busy hum is heard. The land is waste:
No structures grand or beautiful remain:
Cathedrals old and stately palaces
Are shapeless ruins; and the noble parks,
The pride and glory of the British realm,
Are lifeless all, charred deep by deadly fires.
No fleets are there; no banners breast the breeze
In all that land: none but the emblem dark
Of desolation floating over all.
No aspirations there with labour hard;
No home, no individual, no hope:
One stagnant mass of base equality
Alone remains to stifle heart and soul:
And yet they have a queen, a gentle dame,
In place of him who gave his blood for them
When freedom's cause failed utterly in Britain:
She came so quietly, unheralded,

So unpretentiously assumed her throne
They never knew it; but without dissent
The foes of all authority and rule
Wear her strange livery of slavery:
Her name is Famine; and she governs them
By right divine with absolute control:
She needs no ministry, no armament:
She wears no golden crown of royalty:
She, like her subjects, loves equality,
Abhors all personal emolument,
All eminence, and all authority
Except her own: and so Queen Famine rules,
And so they serve with banishment of toil
In liberty, equality and love,
And misery untold. If any man
Has killed a wandering beast they flock around
Like vultures over carrion, nor leave
Till every bone is bare; and when one dies
He dies to keep a starving horde alive.
Their furious hate and ardour militant
Are gone forever, but their ghastly deeds
Are present still to mock their deep distress.
In highland glens, by Scotia's lakes and rivers,
By noble Shannon and the lordly Thames,
Wherever Liberty's mad band assailed
And sacrificed its enemies to love,
It gave no burial, and their skeletons
By myriads are bleaching in the sun.
The scene is changing and the British Isles
Are moving toward the west beyond my ken.

The great Iberian peninsula
Now comes before me, and the realm of France
Over the Pyrennees; and, northward still,
Holland and Belgium upon the sea,
All lie before my vision clear and full.

MEPHIE

What word from them to us? What hope for man?

MUFFIE

A voice of wailing from the house of death
Is all to us: they have no hope for man.
What centuries of labour had achieved
Has ruthless devastation razed or burned:
In all Queen Famine's rule is absolute
Once more the view transforms: those blighted lands
Are moving far into obscurity.
I see the German realm upon the west,
The Ural range and river on the east,
The lofty Caucasus and great twin seas
Upon the south, and all the lands between.

MEPHIE

What cheer from them? What message to the world?

MUFFIE

Queen Famine's cheer: their message to the world
Is all-pervading ruin dyed in blood,
Distresses manifold with mad despair
That sear the stricken heart and pall the soul.
The world grows dark to me: no sea, no land;

I only hear the surging of the waters.
My sight returns: the continent is gone,
Even the lofty Alps and Apennines
Have passed from view: the ocean swallowed them.
Another change: the British Isles again
Are rising from the ocean just before us.

MEPHIE

Has aught in mercy tempered their distress?

MUFFIE

No mercy tempers them: their miseries
Are more and greater than they were before,
At first Queen Famine ruled alone, but now
Her daughter joins her in the government
With full authority: her daughter Plague
Whose potency is felt in all the realm:
Her sceptre is the hydra that she holds;
And subtle death darts fly to every part
With hisses from the snake's unnumbered heads.
There is no love in all that desolate land,
No trust, no tie; and every living soul
Flies all the rest as harbingers of doom:
The mother flies her child; and if she hears
Its dying moan she flies it farther yet.
And when the deadly shaft has pierced a heart
The helpless victim crawls away to die
With maledictions upon earth and heaven,
Without a hope to soothe his agony,
Without attention and without a tear.

On all the ruined cities rests a ban:
None enter them: none save the very few
Who felt the poison dart and yet survived:
When those meet there, half famished and half mad,
The reeking halls resound with merriment
And fiendish mockery before the dead.
The scene transforms: the British Isles recede
While other lands approach; and now I see
All Europe to its utmost boundaries,
Save only Hellas, plain before us here.

MEPHIE

How prospers Europe? Is there change for good?

MUFFIE

No change for good: Queen Famine governs yet:
Famine and Plague: their rule is absolute.
The loathsome horrors of the British Isles
Are everywhere. I see the ruins bleak;
I see the countless poison springs and streams;
I see the ghastly wanderers flying still
With terror and mistrust in every face;
I see the crazed, the dying and the dead;
I hear the wails from dismal solitudes,
The blasphemies of brutal misery.
My sight grows very dim; my body faints;
My spirit sinks before the passing world.

MEPHIE

Enough, my Prophet. Take a respite here.
Turn toward the south and view the vale below:

Its mingled beauties will revive your spirit.
Much yet remains to witness and relate;
And what will come are worse than what have passed.

(Muffie turns toward the south and looks down the vale.)

MUFFIE

Let the worst come. My spirit is refreshed.
With heaven above and my good Master near
The ordeal is welcome. I am ready.

MEPHIE

Well said, my Prophet. Heaven will shelter you.
Look north again and tell us what appears.

(Muffie turns and looks toward the north.)

MUFFIE

At rest upon its restless ocean bed
I see all Europe, save the realm of Hellas.

MEPHIE

Do Famine and her daughter rule it still?

MUFFIE

Famine and Plague are gone. The rule is changed,
And all is changed. It is not Europe now:
It is what Heaven made it from the first,
A mere appendage of the Asian world.
Within my vision all its glorious realms,
Its mighty realms of old have passed away:

The Asiatic lord is master there.
From all of Asia except Japan.
Ignoble sons of sires illustrious
In freedom's golden age are slaves today:
They kneel before him and obey his nod,
Rejoice in smiles or tremble in his frown.
No realm escapes the universal doom:
The Asiatic rulers govern all,
Each in his own domain; but all alike
Their rule is rapine, blood and slavery.

MEPHIE

Are you quite sure that Asia governs all?

MUFFIE

I did mistake about Iberia:
The African Morisco governs there:
A difference without a difference.
There is no hope, no respite on the earth:
The doom of death is man's whole destiny!

MEPHIE

Not quite so bad: the eye of faith grows dim,
But heaven with hope is present, though unseen.

MUFFIE

My vision fails: impenetrable mist
Has fallen upon the sea: it lifts again.
Europe is gone, the British Isles appear.

MEPHIE

Is Britain free? Does her imperial fleet
Circle and guard inviolable shores?

MUFFIE

She is not free: she feels the tyrant's power
In all its terror, shame and bitterness:
The Asian rules in her degenerate isles:
Her pale barbarians are only slaves
To feed his pleasure and promote his weal:
And such they deem themselves. The very fleet
That once made Britain monarch of the seas,
Sold for a pittance in Queen Famine's time,
Now guards her prisoned coast. I see the sons
Of Albion and Erin fall to earth
Before their lords; I see their toils and pains;
I see the devastation and the spoil,
The violation and the sacrilege,
I hear the daughter's cry, the mother's moan;
I see the father's helpless agony;
I hear his lamentation and his curse!
I see no more: my eyes are dim with tears;
And now the wails of sorrow die away.

MEPHIE

The isles are gone; the ocean too is gone,
And all the vale is natural again.
But what the Prophet saw is writ in heaven
As time will manifest before the world
If men heed not his vision. You have told

How anarchy arose to spoil and ruin,
How Europe sacrificed well ordered law,
All rights of men, all sacred ties and hopes,
All individual joys, ambitions, pride,
And all the golden fruits of ages past
To soul debasing, false equality,
To love debauched, to happiness forlorn,
And liberty in chains; and how withal
She lost her glorious potency in arms,
And Asia's countless numbers, unrestrained,
Poured over her amain: all Europe then,
Save only Hellas, felt the blighting power
And supped the poison gall of slavery.
Let not your spirit faint: though terrible
The vision came in mercy. Men perhaps
May heed the warning of your prophecy:
But if it be rejected utterly
The world will surely see what you have seen.
We take a respite. When we meet again
The scene will change: your vision will portray
The nether sphere of human destiny.

LEORA

Muffie is tired and sad; but ere we part
A noble sonnet is Unone's due.

MUFFIE

That were impossible: with time untold
A sonnet worthy of Unone's name
Would be a task beyond poor Muffie's power.

THE FINTO

Muffie, my friend, Leora wishes it:
What she desires you cannot fail to do:
Her fire from heaven will animate your spirit.

MUFFIE
(Improvising)

SONNET TO UNONE

Below the waters in the heart's great deep
Repose its buried treasures more and less:
The ghastly skeletons of happiness
Lie there together in eternal sleep,
So long, so low it has forgot to weep:
The child of pride ambition's *wild* excess
The dear one taken from a fond caress,
Bestrew the caves where sunbeams never peep:

But one pure joy will ever charm for me:
One name, Unone's name, can never die;
Her mother's heart will ever throb with mine.
Though deadly ills be cruel fate's decree
No power of life nor death may rend the tie
When earth and heaven link in love divine.

LEORA

Muffie, a sonnet beautiful indeed:
That mother's love will ever cherish it.

CONCOURSE III

MEPHIE

Our work, well done, is over for today:
Record it carefully. Farewell, my Prophet.

THE FINTO

Farewell, dear Muffie, till we meet again.

LEORA

We surely meet again. Good-bye, good-bye.

MUFFIE

Farewell, my Master dear. Farewell, dear Friends.

(Mephie, The Finto and Leora disappear. Exit Muffie.)

CONCOURSE IV

SCENE: Muffie standing upon an eminence in Yellowstone Park.
TIME: A bright summer day.

MUFFIE

What nature can disclose magnificent
And wonderful I see in this retreat:
The distant mountain chains on every side
With high peaks glorious in icy crowns,
The clear deep lake whose far extended shores
Are bowered in evergreen, the crystal river
That plunges from the sheer stupendous height
To cleave the hills beyond, its gorge profound
Whose walls abrupt in many colourings,
Lit by the sunbeams and the foaming torrent,
Are ever-changing, ever-beautiful:
All these and more that crowd upon the sense
And awe the soul are round me everywhere:
But over all are those demoniac things
Whose raging waters cleave the ambient air,
Resplendent far aloft. Throughout this vale
Of Alpine height their steaming cones appear,
Alike, distinct in form and qualities.
Old Faithful there, his hour of rest complete
And strength renewed, with quakings terrible

Propels his waters toward the upper sky.
The Giant yonder, greater, stronger far,
Like some volcano heaves the hills amain,
And sends his blazing waters higher still.
The Giantess, more dreadful yet than he,
Strangest of all, I see without a cone:
In boundless fury of the ages past
She rent her cone and granite sides away,
And left her wide expanse of angry waters.
She surges now: more and more horrible
Her waters roll; and now with marvellous power
She sends her mighty column heavenward
The while she almost wrecks the labouring earth.
Before me in the distance, yet asleep,
I see the little Beehive, to the eye
So insignificant and innocent
A careless child might play upon his top
In full security; but now he wakes
And breathes his curling steam into the air;
And higher, denser, higher till his rim
Is gently overflowed; more violent,
In fitful whirling gushes he projects
The angry seething fluids: suddenly,
In one continuous, tremendous burst,
Far, far away, beyond the reach of thought,
His waters gleam above the lower world
To greet the midday sun. Earth does not quake:
Foreboding death she trembles in her pangs
Lest every fateful moment prove her last.
His miracle subsides as it began,

And she is happy in deliverance;
But over me he cast a spell sublime
That cannot die: among his dread compeers
He knows no equal: he is all supreme,
The unchallenged monarch of this wondrous realm.
It is a holy place. My soul, inspired
By full diffusion of Omnipotence,
Perceives herself in audience with heaven.
But not alone the grandeur and the awe
Encompass me: a subtile influence
Pervades the air and permeates my being:
I feel it more and more as I have felt
In precious moments when the Master blessed
And spirits dear were at my side unseen:
They must be near: such joy is not of earth:
It is the rapture of supernal spheres.

(Mephie, The Finto and Leora appear upon Muffie's left. He approaches them and they greet him affectionately.)

LEORA

You knew our presence, Muffie: am I right?

MUFFIE

I felt it plainly as I see you here.

MEPHIE

Sweet intercourse of immortalities
Full spiritual sense perceives and feels
Celestial presence and celestial love:
Most mortals, like the partly colour blind,

Perceive obscurely and imperfectly;
And often these, by things upon the earth
Blinded still more to things above the earth,
Cannot perceive at all, do not believe.

MUFFIE

O that kind Heaven would give the sense to all
That all might have the precious intercourse!

MEPHIE

Your passionate wish, though born of charity,
Is critical of Deity, and so
Wholly unworthy of my Poet Prophet.

MUFFIE

Your pardon, Master; Heaven's pardon too
For heedless words: my fault will not recur.

MEPHIE

It cannot, for the light of inspiration
And angels' love will guide the Prophet right.
But mortals vain, in pride of intellect
All circumscribed, construct their various worlds
In contradiction to Omnipotence:
They spread their wings upon the dark abyss
Without a guide, no compass and no star
To gauge infinity, regardless all
That farther flight goes farther yet astray.

MUFFIE'S PROPHECY

MUFFIE

Will it be so forever? Will the time
Of miracle and prophecy divine
Return no more, nor Heaven come to earth
In vengeance to confound His enemies?

MEPHIE

The time of miracle and prophecy
Is present still, and it can never pass.
God's miracles are doing every day
But few discern: He speaks as plainly now
As to the sainted poet seers of old;
But most are deaf as they have ever been.
Believe me, should another prophet rise
Like rapped Isaiah he would hear the voice,
And thunder forth in words of living fire
The doom that brazen infamy and wrong
Bring down upon themselves: yes, Heaven is here,
But not in wrath to smite His enemies
For He is love supreme: they smite themselves:
Man's every thought rewards or punishes:
It must ennoble or degrade the soul.

MUFFIE

If Heaven does not punish, can there be,
As men believe, a place of misery
Where souls incorrigible ever feel
The unmeasured torments of undying fires?
I have imagined oft that on the sun

Or in the liquid centre of the earth
Might be their place of deadly banishment:
But in the lapse of time the earth will cool,
Even to the centre, and the sun himself
Spend his tremendous heat, and roll through space
Dark, dead and cold as our own lifeless moon:
So not within the earth nor on the sun
Can endless torment dwell. Give me the light
As far as mortal may receive the light.

MEPHIE

There is no place of punishment; and yet
There is a place of miserable death
Where passions foul of spirits prostitute
Kindle infernal fires: the only fires
That may assail supernal essences.
To harrow beings incorporeal
The zephyr sweet which fans the violet
Is all as potent as the molten sun.
A vision true of that dark dismal world,
As far as earthbound souls may have and know,
By Heaven's command you will be shown today.
A word beside my duty: you mistake:
The sun can never cool: by Sovereign Will
The central pressure of his mighty mass
Upon itself begets the light and heat
He radiates to his revolving orbs:
You see, my Prophet, one mysterious power,

Heaven's power, which holds the planets in their
course,
Illuminates and warms them on their way.
But time is up. Come, sit beside me, Muffie.

(Mephie and Muffie seat themselves upon a rock: Muffie is on the left.)

Repose your head in trust upon my breast
As on a mother's: Heaven is with you here.

(Muffie lays his head upon Mephie's breast and sleeps: Supported by Mephie standing on his right, he wakes on the foot of a mountain in the fiery Vale of Death: The Finto and Leora are standing on Mephie's right.)

This is the place of souls unworthy heaven
Upon their way to death. What see you, Muffie?

MUFFIE

I see a gloomy, fiery vale below
With desolate mountain chains on either side:
Black darkness hides their top, but I can hear
The dismal wailing of the winter winds
Through peaks invisible. No rill descends
From those dead heights. There is no heaven above
To cheer that vale of doom. A strange weird river
With many affluents rolls down on fire.
The only light is from the lurid flames
Of those infernal rivers, and the gleaming
Of dense effluvia that rise and fall.

CONCOURSE IV

Far down the vale the mountain chains recede
On either side, and farther still unite
To form a basin where a lurid lake
Of wide expanse receives the burning river.
I see the spirits in the fiery vale
As they were mortal still. The streams are fed
By reeking vapours from those fated souls.
Bright scintillations of effluvium
Are issuing from all at every part:
As these arise they gather into clouds
Of changing fires which light the sombre vale;
And then, at intervals, in glowing showers
Replenish burning streams and fade away.
The souls enjoy the showers and bathe in them;
And ever and anon, as by constraint,
They rush into the streams, and while they lave
Imbibe to rapture of the fiery waters.
The flames encircle them, and yet it seems,
Inflict no pain to mar their ecstasy.
All lave alike, all drink alike, and then
With heightened zest and power pursue their ways:
And all seem happy in their fiery home:
Can it be so? Have they no pain, no sorrow?
Is this their doom? Is this the very end?

MEPHIE

Their doom but not their end as will appear
Far down the vale where all are journeying.
The subtle poison of those burning streams,
The emanations born of deadly passions,

Gives joyous exaltation while it saps
And blights the very essence of their being
Till immortality is lost in death:
It is not punishment: within that vale
Can be no pain, no sorrow, no despair:
Its busy denizens in all their strife,
In all their passions, wiles and vanities,
Proceed along the beaten ways of earth
For they are human souls. Some souls appear
Whose sense divine was all obscured in life
By reasonings false and proud: they pace about
In lofty thought on systems arrogant,
Lave, drink, and grope their way down fiery streams
Among the odious. Relate to us
What most absorbs among those fated ones,
And picture it again before the world.

MUFFIE

Workings malign of passions dark, intense,
Reacting, interacting constantly
In devious ways defy the poet's power.

MEPHIE

The prophet's power is ample. Not the loud
Obtrusive forms of blatant infamy,
But the sad vision of the souls below,
All bearing down the Fiery Vale to death,
Must be your picture to the souls on earth.

CONCOURSE IV

MUFFIE

An aureole around a spirit's brow,
Like the bright halo of divinity,
In words of fire distinct records her name,
And what she did aforetime in the world:
But some appear without a history,
Some even without a name: what can it mean?

MEPHIE

Those are the souls malign of childhood's years:
Their dark propensities, concealed from man
Before their flight, were only known in heaven.

MUFFIE

Why said the Master then, when little ones
Were turned away from him, "Of such is heaven"?

MEPHIE

Because it is: Divine Immanuel
Extolled an infancy of purity,
Of trusting faith and love like heaven itself:
The souls below were not within that pale.
Celestial laws obey the Father's will
In things ethereal: by nature's laws.
His will controls throughout the universe.
Man's dual nature in the spirit world
And world material makes him alone
Amenable to all: and hence it is
Subversive powers upon the earthly side

May mar the spirit in her natal hour
And make her all impossible for heaven,
A wayward thing of evil from the first.

MUFFIE

By inspiration from the Master dear
I see a truth I never saw before,
And all is clear. The busy spirits there
Feed passions dominant, malevolent,
Insatiate, as they have done on earth.
I see a pair together, man and wife
In their mortality, who count their gains
And gloat upon possession won by wrong.
A dying father in his testament
Consigned the man his children's legacy
In trust to be administered for them:
But afterward, the man possessed of all,
It was administered for himself and his:
The orphans were despoiled and cast aside:
Not one iota ever went to them.
His ledger was required, and he replied
That it could not be found; and it could not:
The lie he told was in accord with fact:
That potent witness to his treachery
Rested upon the bottom of the sea:
The mighty waters of the Golden Gate
Had swallowed it full many a fathom down.
But Heaven Himself it seemed by miracle
Opposed the infamy. A fisherman
With deepest ocean tackling, far from shore,

Drew up the book uninjured from its bed:
When afterward the man appeared in court
His ledger lay before him open wide
With all its evidence; but even then,
Despite its testimony clear and full,
By diabolical tenacity
And ingenuity in devious laws
He held the orphans' heritage forever.
With exultations loud and laughter deep
They glorify successful perfidy.
They weary now; their aureoles grow dim;
And, plunging headlong in the burning stream,
They drink its waters and renew their powers.
Another spirit glides along the stream
On stealthy foot and greets the gathered souls:
Her voice is musical, low-toned and sweet.
In, out and in among the multitude,
With words of seeming sympathy for one,
Love for another, charity for all,
She goes upon her never-ending way:
But every pleasant word is poison tipped,
And, far as may be on those fated souls,
Works like the cobra's venom on the blood.
She was a gentle woman, and her life
On earth was blessed with every charm and hope
Which lead to happiness: her palace home,
The dear ancestral home her fathers knew,
Was lowered and hidden in its wide domain,
Its realm of oaks whose crowns had spread their leaves
To greet the suns of many centuries.

The rarest flowers from every tropic clime,
And birds of gorgeous plumage, birds of song,
Commingled there to make a paradise.
She was half orphan for her mother's life
Was lost upon her birth. Her father saw
Her full maturity of maiden beauty,
And then his health declined: his family,
Though numerous in generations past,
With many branches from the parent stem,
Was then reduced in numbers: only two,
Two distant cousins, young collegians,
Remained to take the noble heritage
By right before his daughter Emelyn:
But she was deeply read in arts occult:
All harmful substances that nature yields,
And all their deadly powers mysterious
In all their combinations manifold,
She knew them well and wrought them skilfully.
All fascinations of resistless beauty
Were hers by nature: she regaled in them:
So while her father lived her cousins died,
And she inherited: the older one,
The last, a man of mark and scholarship,
Was her own suitor, and his grateful heart
Was rich in her affection: both were then
Together at the palace, not alone:
Another cousin, Emelyn's dearest friend,
Was there with her betrothed. The day was set,
One day for all; and happy Emelyn
Outdid her very self in radiant beauty

And witchery of wondrous womanhood.
But when the time drew near a dark disease
Attacked her lover: fever, mild at first
But rapidly increasing, sapped his life.
What medicine could do, what prayer could do,
And all that love could do was done for him;
And Emelyn, in all her anxious grief
More beautiful, if that were possible,
Than in her joy, watched over him:
But all was vain: inexorable fate
Decreed his death: he went from bad to worse
Till reason lost her sovereignty, and then
His wandering mind still dwelt on Emelyn.
The end came soon and all were overwhelmed,
And Emelyn was inconsolable.
He died upon the appointed bridal day:
The death toll stilled the golden wedding bells.
The stricken friend departed all in tears
Of hapless maidenhood; but Emelyn,
Forlorn, exacted promise of return
And marriage too when time had tempered sorrow.
The maiden's promise was impossible
Of sweet fulfilment: from that very hour
Her lover proved himself both false and cruel:
He cast away her trusting, faithful heart
Without one soothing word or fond regret.
Some time for mourning past, not very long,
While she was rapped in solitary grief,
He paid his court to Emelyn herself
To be rebuffed severely, and reproved

Without effect for his false-heartedness.
The more unmerciful was Emelyn
The more his wild infatuation grew
Till melancholy seized him; then his mind
In hopeless hope grew darker till the end.
Time passed and Emelyn became a wife:
Two sons were born before her husband's death;
And Emelyn thenceforth remained a widow,
Besieged by many suitors, much admired,
And much beloved unhappily by all.
And ever here, as when upon the earth,
She goes with sweet, seductive, blighting words,
The while her gracious ways compel the souls
To admiration which resembles love.

MEPHIE

The histories, though various and rich
In vital truth, are not our chief concern.
To note this vision of the fated spirits
Upon their pitiable way to death,
As I have said, is your first duty here.

MUFFIE

Unceasing labours, onerous and vain,
Appear throughout the vale. The spirits gather,
Disperse and gather as their motives guide;
And every one intent upon her own,
Her dominant lusts and passions odious,
Her guidance blind, her deep perverse designs.
Upon exhaustion, driven as by fate,

They lave in lambent showers and lurid streams,
And sup exhilaration from the waters
While darting serpent flames encircle them.
All dark intents of animosity,
All baleful lusts and passions known to men,
Are everywhere in strife continuous.
Two spirits yonder, old antagonists,
Resume their lifelong enmity of earth
With crimination and vituperation.
'My father saved yours from a felon's doom,'
Exclaims the one with angry voice and mien,
'And in return was pauperized by him!'
With fiendish laughter comes the quick reply:
'He was a fool and reaped a fool's reward.
That you inherited by right divine.'
Many the souls of men and women, too,
Spirits most vile, rejoicing over gains
From groping prisoners in the caves of death,
From vices nameless ever even here:
Among them pass the souls without constraint
Who fed their avarice, all wanton still,
But so transformed from every native beauty,
So grovelling and hideous in look,
Their very panders would compassion them
If pity here were not impossible.
Far other souls in contemplation deep
On things terrestrial pace the barren plain:
All similar and yet all different:
By every subtle art of villany
One held upon his devious, deadly course:

Another's promise was inviolate,
His word was ever true: yet both alike,
Perverse and hard, were bound in golden chains.
No pleasure in the earth nor in the skies,
No charity, no love for man nor heaven,
They held their ruthless way to gainful ends,
And left their trail of misery behind:
The old man's little store from labour long,
The widow's home, the orphan's heritage,
Were swallowed up by them with heartless joy
To feed an appetite insatiate:
So passed their lives, and so they left the world;
And so they journey down the Vale of Death
Two classes opposite commingle there
Among the spirits: one of sullen front
And stern demeanour, holding in themselves,
In fancied certainty, all light of truth,
And hating all beyond their narrow pale:
Their very nature is anathema:
They call incessantly and ardently
For Heaven's avenging punishment on all
Who follow not their light: strange as it seems,
Their prayers resound for vengeance even here:
But stranger yet than all, the aureoles
Of many tell of boundless avarice,
Or passions odious and violent,
Or both combined, all ruthless and corrupt.
On earth their contraries like butterflies
Outflew the hours on pleasure's vagrant wing:
No look beyond, above, no sober thought,

No impulse generous, no high resolve
With earnest labour in a holy cause:
From day to day, from youth to drooping age
The aim and consummation of their life
Was pleasure sensuous and sensual.
Here as on earth play, dance and revelry,
Diversion still in all its varying forms,
In all its wearying round of nothingness,
Absorbs them quite, regarding not those bounds
Nor death's dark doom impending over them.
The felon guilds appear in all the vale:
With sidelong furtive glance or brazen face
They greet the passing souls; but in the guise
Of conscious guilt or bold effrontery
The mark of Cain is on their forehead still:
They know each other and are known by all.
A group of them assembles by the river,
And each assumes the proud preeminence:
They tell things horrible with rapture high
As might a soldier speak of noble deeds
In face of death, or some evangelist
Relate the story of a spirit saved.
The souls who ply the trade of politics
Through stimulus nefarious and low
Are ever active here as on the earth.
In conclave secret their designs mature;
By tortuous hidden ways they reach dark ends;
All sycophancy to the prince or mob,
They bend the servile knee to power enthroned
Or deify the proletariat.

Though quick to take the deftly proffered bribe
And reap the profits of iniquity
They simulate the guise of honesty
Before the vale and claim the patriot's crown.
Another class of miscreants appears
Among the rest, in wealth or poverty
As fortune smiles or frowns on villany:
As in their mortal state they practise here
All subtle arts and secret ways of theft,
And with another diabolic art
That stills the victim's plaint: with them appear
Two other classes, old associates
Of theirs upon the earth as in the vale:
Besotted one, degraded in extreme,
Both mental sense and moral in eclipse:
The other saunters proud and prosperous,
With all the perquisites of affluence:
But here their avocation is no more:
All drink the liquid of the fiery streams.
Here are the various literary clans,
Poets and prosemen who, while on the earth,
Were ministers to vice in all her forms
And all her varied natures, who confused
The boundaries between the pure and foul,
And sapped the very citadel of virtue
In holy name of truth and righteousness:
Their deadly work goes on: their restless pens
Are dipped in liquid of the burning rivers;
The infernal pages ever multiply.
Throughout the vale beyond restraint the hordes

Of spirits wild predominate the rest:
Their ardent fury bides no opposite:
Their cry is still for love and liberty,
And absolute equality for all:
Their love is only cruelty untold,
Their liberty is tyranny supreme;
And full equality, as on the earth,
Is degradation hopeless and complete
They recognise no individual rights,
Have but one purpose, one perverted will
To see all souls on level with themselves.
A parliament beyond the burning river
Appears in session, and the savage souls
Are gathered deep around it clamouring,
No laws for us! no tyranny for us!
The ringing voices of the woman souls
Are more tempestuous. And now I hear
A fearful cry resounding through the vale
As once it sounded terribly on earth:
" You are no more parliament," and they dissolve.

MEPHIE

We are passing down the vale by miracle.
The lake is clearer now. Note every change
For all are fateful to the unconscious souls,
And all must be recorded for the world.
But not alone the vision ominous:
The things unseen are all important too.
We have not seen among those countless spirits
Anguish for crime, sorrow for misery,

Nor any touch of sympathy or love.
A single tear of charity or pity
From any soul upon the burning river
Would quench the deadly fires about that soul,
And bring the angels down from heaven to her.

MUFFIE

I see no change material; and yet
There is one difference: the spirits here
Bathe frequently, are longer in the stream:
And here another, greater change appears:
Their aureoles are smaller, less distinct;
The souls have lost their primal strength and fire,
And still decline, emerging from the stream
With renovation less and less complete.
Their haloes here are quite invisible,
And they themselves are miserably changed:
No power nor will to leave the stream they float,
Listless and helpless as the current glides,
To reach the waters of the burning lake.
I see them faintly, and more faintly now,
Tossed limp upon the fiery curling waves
As lifeless all; and now they disappear.
I feel a dreadful change. My sight is gone:
The upper darkness has enveloped us.

(Mephie and Muffie are again seated upon the rock: Muffie is on the left, sleeping, with his head resting upon Mephie's breast. The Finto and Leora are on Mephie's right. Muffie wakes.)

CONCOURSE IV

MEPHIE

Back safe, my Prophet, from the Vale of Death.

MUFFIE

Back safe! The gracious Master shielded me
When Stygian darkness had infolded me,
And Heaven, it seemed, would cast my soul away!

MEPHIE

It was the Prophet's ordeal supreme,
Passed like a prophet of the olden time.
Picture again what you have seen today
That wayward Earth may know her destiny.

MUFFIE

With Heaven's favour men shall see the vision
As true and clear as I myself have seen it
That light of prophecy may guide the world.

THE FINTO

Dear Muffie mine, the world will wander still
In spite of prophecy and heaven itself.

LEORA

Not all: the prophet's light is not in vain:
Some souls afar will see and follow it.

MEPHIE

Our task is done. A song, Leora dear.

THE FINTO.
Sing us a love song in your sweet, sad vein.

LEORA
(Singing)

(1)
Dark despair to hope is nearest,
Boundless joy to pain severest.
Fare thee well, my own, my dearest!
Ever fare thee well!

(2)
Blind as death to fate impending,
How I dreamed of bliss unending,
Dreamed of heaven to earth descending:
Then the wild farewell!

(3)
O thou Child of Glory, never
From its pole my heart sever!
Love forlorn will live forever,
Moaning sad farewell!

(4)
Longing, weeping, sighing, sighing!
Hopeless, endless dying, dying!
Only hear me crying, crying,
Dearest, fare thee well!

(5)

Fare thee well! Good angels bless thee!
Faithful, fondest love caress thee!
Wailing sorrow ne'er oppress thee!
Fare thee, fare thee well!

(6)

Fare thee well! it must be spoken
Though my yearning heart be broken!
Hear the last, the saddest token:
Loved One, fare thee well!

MEPHIE

A pleasure past expression, dear Leora.

LEORA

A love song, Finto, in your sad, mad vein.

THE FINTO
(Singing)

(1)

I will journey far from the dismal spot
Till my fatal dream is a thing forgot,
Till the hateful name is remembered not,
And skies are bright above me.

(2)

O the queenly form in perfection rare,
The blue eye so mild, and the face so fair,
And her wealth of sunbeaming golden hair,
And promise dear to love me!

(3)

When she gave her pledge,—not in words expressed:
In her tears and sobs it was all confessed;
And I fondly thought I was more blessed
In troth by angel plighted.

(4)

O the dark, dark fate! but I will be free
From a heart untrue as the heart can be!
Every tear and sob was a curse to me,
And all my life is blighted!

(5)

It was day of doom upon which we met!
How I loved,—O me, how I love her yet!
What are faithless tears when the heart is set!
It clings though all has perished!

(6)

It is vain, in vain, if the pride rebels
While the sweet, sad theme on the memory dwells,
And a deeper love in my bosom swells
Than earth has ever cherished.

(7)

What is this, weak One? You are yielding now!
Was my birthright sold for a broken vow?
Was I born a slave? I will never bow
Till heart and soul dissever!

(8)

O the joyous hope that was mine before!
O the trusting love time cannot restore!
The enraptured hours that will come no more!
Farewell, farewell, forever!

MEPHIE

And Finto too: I cannot say enough.
Farewell, my Prophet: we shall meet again
At duty's call: till then, farewell, with love.

THE FINTO

Farewell, my Muffie, till we meet in love.

LEORA

Good-bye, with sweet remembrance till we come.

MUFFIE

My gracious Master, Angel Friends, farewell!

(Mephie, The Finto and Leora disappear. Exit Muffie.)

CONCOURSE V

SCENE: Muffie standing upon Mount Parnassus.
TIME: A clear summer day.

MUFFIE

Am I awake or do I only dream
Under the pine where I was lulled asleep
By dying dirges from the distant sea?
I do not dream: my vision is no phantom:
That is the realm of Hellas, and this peak
Must be Parnassus: it can be no other.
All is reality, and yet how changed:
Parnassus towers above his great compeers
In solitary grandeur: I can see
What lies beyond them upon every side
As if by miracle: and such it is:
A miracle conveyed me here, and here
I wait the Master's pleasure till he come.

(Mephie, The Finto and Leora appear upon Muffie's right.)

MEPHIE

Good, faithful Prophet: he is with you now
And will support you in your coming trial,

MUFFIE

My Master dear, dear Friends, my joy is full.
What task you bring, what ordeal severe
Is but the manifest of love to me.

LEORA

But not to you alone: to you and all.

THE FINTO

And yet to Muffie as the poet seer
Of clearer faith we give a special honour,
A special love direct and personal.

MEPHIE

It ever has been so. Where are we, Muffie?

MUFFIE

We are in Hellas, upon Mount Parnassus.

MEPHIE

This mountain has no rival in the Alps:
It should not be Parnassus. Look again:
Look carefully, then tell me where we are.

MUFFIE

That sea-rent land is Hellas: I am sure.
For cause divine by miracle supreme
Parnassus overtops all other peaks;
And even high Olympus in the north
Seems little in comparison with him.

MEPHIE

You reason right, my Muffie: that is Hellas;
This is Parnassus; and the miracle
Is but the prelude to a prophecy
Of strife and horror: is my Prophet ready?

MUFFIE

Yes, ever ready for the Master's work.

MEPHIE

Picture us Hellas as you see her there:
Not too particular, but general.

MUFFIE

Her northern boundary is crescent formed,
Extending from Corcyra's southern cape
To Nestus River near the Ægean main.
All Hellas northward from the Khassia Range,
And from the mountain way that skirts Olympus
Upon the south, all in the west extreme
Between the Arta and the Ionian Sea,
All lying east from Therma's western shore,
A realm within itself: that have we seen
Redeemed from Ottoman but yesterday,
And held against the Bulgar's wild assaults
By deeds immortal; and if spirits feel
Rapture and pride in such the men of old
Who met the Persian hosts at Marathon
And Salamis must glory in their sons.
On every side appears a land of mountains.

The noble Pindus holds the west extreme;
And lofty ranges from the distant east,
Like greatest rivers in the ocean's flood,
Are swallowed up and lost among his peaks.
The mighty ranges from Lepanto Gulf
Toward the far north or toward the southern capes
Complete the picture, incomplete in all:
For everywhere among her greater chains
Are other smaller ranges joined or sundered;
And isolated peaks are interspersed
To make a mountain maze inscrutable.
But even her mountain world cannot surpass
The ever-changing grandeur of her coast:
Its gulfs and bays whence great emporiums
Extend commercial arms to every land,
Its far peninsulas that cleave the sea
With headland high and bold, all seem indeed
As if Old Ocean in titanic rage
Of times long lost had rifted earth away,
Or, stranger still, as if plutonic powers
Had rent the eternal rock in every part.
To southward far upon the south extreme
Where Europe ends I see the four great gulfs
And their peninsulas whose rockbound heights
Vex all the sea into perpetual rage:
There not a promontory, not an isle,
And not one wave that rolls upon the deep
But tells the story of a wondrous past
In harmony with nature's majesty.
Thence north and westward on the western coast

Opens Lepanto's giant waterway,
Winding along from west to eastern shore
In devious course by mountains, vales and streams,
By cities prosperous and ruins drear,
With stormy capes, with bays for busy marts
And plying ships: a little ocean world,
Lying in marvellous beauty at our feet.
Northeastward far appears great Therma Gulf:
It is an inland sea of Hellas now:
There, glorious upon her deep recess,
Thessalonica, Queens of the Ægean,
Receives her tribute from the eastern world:
There wrought the martyr monarch, there he bled
In the great fatal moment that fulfilled
The cherished hope of consecrated life.
All streams in Hellas are of mountain birth;
And in the farther south where grandeur reigns
In all beside rivers are trivial.
One southern gulf receives a living stream:
Eurotas winds its way from northern hills
Through reeds and flowers into Laconia.
Storied Ægina, easternmost of all,
Greatest of all, where sits Athenæ crowned
With double diadem, receives no river:
Cephissus flows upon Athenæ's right,
Ilissus on her left: a rivulet
That disappears before the summer sun:
Cephissus, larger, is lost utterly
To make a cool suburban paradise.
Rivers are larger on the main of Hellas.

The great Peneus, Monarch of the Realm,
From northern Pindus and the Khassia Range,
Pursues his tortuous course from west to east,
With many tribute streams upon the way,
To reach his ocean home in Therma Gulf.
A noble river, wandering Europus,
Is last to join near Tempe's mountain vale:
In that deep gorge I see where beauty dwells
In glory unapproachable: below
The mighty river foaming, surging on,
Mad to his destiny; on either side
The winding wall, sheer up to meet the sky,
Is under canopy of vines and flowers;
And graceful trees whose branches interlace,
Festooned with clematis, are over all.

MEPHIE

What else appears of beautiful or strange?

MUFFIE

Beyond the entrance I can just perceive,
On a small terrace up the dizzy height,
The little town of Amberlakia,
A swallow's nest upon the granite wall.
On all the gulfs and streams, on all the plains,
On all the mountain sides, in all the vales
Appear the busy towns and villages.
Far toward the south and near the south extreme
Where Sparta stood, and from the riverside
Ruled Lacedæmon in her golden prime,

I see another Sparta on Eurotas,
Unlike the first, without her memories,
A modern village on historic ground,
Yet greater in the unity of Hellas
Than was the old in all her power and pride.
Thence north and eastward in its deep recess
Stands Nauplia upon its noble bay.
The city, filled with busy, joyous life,
The darksome haunts where rapturous beauty dwells,
Are full before me but they fade away:
I only see the band of patriots
Below the rock that black December night,
Gathered to die, a hopeless hope forlorn:
I see them next, as by supernal aid,
Swoop down upon that rock like birds of prey,
And Ottoman awakes a prisoner.
Now the resourceful Ibrahim appears
With blight and burning in his victories
From the far west to Palamidi Rock,
Last hope of Hellas; and I see him there,
By slow approach and furious assault,
Impel his powers again and yet again
In vain upon that hold impregnable,
And Hellas lives today: northwestward thence,
Past desolate Tiryns and the high Larisa,
The City of Argos rises from the plain:
It seems the market of a fruitful vale,
A village overgrown; but gathered there
In its museum are its monuments
Of power and art mysterious: they take

CONCOURSE V

Imagination back through cycles vast
To immemorial antiquity
When Argos ruled and Babylon was great.
To north and eastward on the eastern shore
Of islanded Ægina: there supreme
Athenæ rises on the Attic Plain:
A double city: her commercial mart
Upon Piræus, in itself alone
A great emporium. The parent city,
The Athenæ known to all in every age,
Born on the Acropolis, extends afar
On every side: she has two giant guards,
The blue Hymettus rising on the south,
And on the north white-veined Pentelicus.
Her monuments, her statues of great dead,
Her theatres, her noble piles of state,
Her sacred structures, marble palaces,
Her glorious ruins on the Acropolis,
All seem the rich magnificent illusions
Of an imaginary wonder world.
There beats the mighty heart of all the realm;
There statesmen labour wisely, earnestly,
For conservation of the heritage
Purchased with patriot blood: there are the great:
Great in the field, in council, on the wave
As were the men of old. She stands today
Unrivalled, mightier far than when alone
She met the Persian hosts: and Hellas too
In heartbound unity, domain and power,
Is far above herself, beyond herself

In her olden golden prime. But where are they,
Supreme philosophers, historians
And orators, the men of magic power
Who wrought celestial beauty on a stone
And gave it real life, the men divine,
The immortal poets and that poetess
Who lured the angels down to hear her song?
Can those return to earth? will they return?

MEPHIE

Well done, my Prophet: now your vision changes
From that which is to that which is to be
If powers destructive overbear the realm
And shape its destiny. What see you, Muffie?

MUFFIE

Dark scenes of strife and horror fill my vision.
Athenæ seems on fire: through all her ways,
In all her squares and every vacant place
Appears a mass of crazed humanity:
Their phrensy rings in shouts of victory
And words of death. Within the assembly hall
A member rises with a bill in hand
To abolish law and government in Hellas:
'My Brother Speaker and Brother Deputies,
We put before you on its final passage
The People's Bill of Rights and Brotherhood:
Henceforth no king nor other sovereign power,
No matter whence derived, however named
Or justified, shall be allowed in Hellas.

The military caste shall cease to be.
All legal tyranny shall cease to be.
All masterdom and slavery, all wealth,
With its two children, poverty and crime,
All marriage and religion with their mask
Of deep hypocrisy, their boundless greed,
Are hereby abrogated in the realm.
All standing laws and statutes are annulled,
And future legislation is forbidden.
Henceforth the Law of Love and Liberty
Which binds the Brotherhood shall rule in Hellas.
Our work is done: it is for you to judge.
And here a few remarks by your committee
May not be out of place. The bill is brief:
Unlike the tyrant statutes of the past,
It needs no explanation: it will guide
Each brother and sister in all ways of life.
It is not ours alone: all deputies,
Except the Arcadians who are absent still,
Gave freely as we gratefully received:
But even those, if they should come to us
And be of us, would not be turned away;
And every other who sincerely comes
Will come to open arms. The Brotherhood,
Although in principles inflexible,
Is sympathetic, mild and merciful.
But while we laboured on our noble task
Some enemies escaped. The morning sun
Lighted an empty palace yesterday:
The king, his ministry and soldiery

Had fled the city on the stormy night
To refuge on the isle of Salamis;
And all the ships of war, all merchantmen,
And all the airships at the king's command
Had gone with them. Their plans were deep and wide
For every merchant vessel in the realm
Put out to sea the night they stole away.
What armament they have, what men they have,
What food they plundered from the public stores
I cannot tell; and we may never know.
All other islands and the main of Hellas,
And all of Europe too are barred against them:
They must choose one of two alternatives,
To die of hunger on that barren isle
Or go to Asia where they belong:
Their choice is quite indifferent to us:
The enemies who brave us to the face
Demand attention first, and they shall have it:
Their time has come: our time has come for action!
He ceases with reechoing applause.
The speaker rises, the commotion stills.
They pass the statute; they adjourn forever,
And leave the hall with tumult riotous
To swell the surging, frantic horde without.
Wilder and wilder yet destruction rages
In every part. The fearful roar of bombs,
And shouts resounding even above the roar
Appal my heart with fury. Over all
The sacred structures, noble piles of state,
And great museums with their golden stores

Rouse the mad revelry: and when they crash
The welkin rings with cheers demoniac
While precious lives are lost: but death's dark toll
Is most in churches where the supplicants
To Heaven are gathered in this dreadful hour;
But even that is very gentleness
Beside the terrors of the plains and hills.
Beyond Athenæ northward flying bands
Are pressing toward the mountains, some on beasts,
Some, fortunate, in cars and carriages;
But most on foot, in groups and families,
Many with babes in arms, are toiling on.
An equal part of all the city host,
Its furious men and women intermixed,
Give hot pursuit. The last to fly on foot,
Soon overtaken in the unequal race,
Are done to death upon the Attic Plain.
Fond, fainting mothers pray the foe with tears
To take their life and spare their little ones:
The tears prevail upon those flaming hearts
Like water sprinkled on Vesuvius.
As on the Attic Plain throughout the realm,
Save in Arcadia, the deadly work
Of savagery goes on; and everywhere
The Brotherhood divides itself in two.
In mountain-compassed, bleak Arcadia
The hardy shepherds rest upon their arms
Before respecting foes. Prudent as brave,
Women and children, the infirm and old,
The beasts of burden and the flocks and herds,

Their food and little household property
They send into the mountain fastnesses
The while they hold their enemies at bay:
But elsewhere in this devastated realm
One only hope inspirits the pursued,
One mad desire impels pursuing hordes;
And as they journey toward the distant heights
They leave behind their reeking trails of blood.
Night follows day, and yet the flying bands
Press on and on until they faint and fall:
An ominous day succeeds the dreadful night:
Destruction's hosts have joined the wild pursuit,
The trails grow longer, wider, darker still.
Of all the flying bands but few escape
Up the high mountain sides: up all but this:
Even the remnant from Arakhova
Fled down Parnassus toward Mount Helicon.
The flight is done, the cruel, close pursuit.
Night spreads her gloomy pall above the dead.
The refugees are gone; the Militants
Retrace their ghastly ways unsatisfied.
The Arcadian shepherds leave their lower hills
And scale the loftiest heights while from without
Destruction's multitudes are pouring in.
Mad devastation fills the day's decline
And all the lurid night. The morning sun
Glints over mountains on a dismal waste.
Upon a balcony in Salamis
I see the king among his ministry;
And, facing him upon adjoining grounds

His little band of army and marine.
They greet the king, and he addresses them:
'My brave and loyal officers and men,
In this dark hour I come to you for help;
And under Heaven you are my sole support,
The last defence of civil liberty
Upon the earth. The realm is desolate:
Only the favoured ones upon this isle,
The monks of Athos and some fugitives
Upon inhospitable mountain heights,
Escaped the Brotherhood of Anarchy.
But for the prudence of our ministers
The holy men had all been massacred.
A battleship in Hierisos Bay
Protects Mount Athos from a savage host.
Two ships at Corinth, one on either side,
Are driving back the countless multitudes
Of men and women gathering from the north
To scourge the Arcadians from their native heights.
The monks have ample food and some to spare
For those less fortunate. We have the power
To hold this isle but food is limited.
The mountain refugees are destitute.
All but the Arcadians, and must have relief:
Relief immediate. It is our task
To save the little life which yet remains.
The main of Hellas with the Brotherhoods
From northern lands has death alone for us.
Our only hope, if hope there be at all,
Is in the south and here in Salamis,

The head and centre of our life and power.
Our ministers have canvassed every part
Of southern Hellas; and, in their opinion,
The plain of Argos, with its fortresses
Of Palamidi Rock and high Larisa,
Is most secure for us. Our course is this:
Two battleships will clear the Argos Plain
Till the great holds are fortified. Our fleet
Will drive the Brotherhood from all Athenæ
And other cities on the southern shore.
It is our trust to find supplies of food,
With merchandise and coal for future use
Buried in Attic and Morean ruins.
The merchant ships that sail for Nauplia
Will carry all supplies for Argos Plain,
With war material of every kind
And all accessory machinery.
The time is past for culture of the soil,
But vineyards will be tended carefully,
And all their fruit preserved. You have our plan:
It may be altered as conditions rise:
But what is done must be without delay
Or all is lost. Heaven guide us now and ever.
They cheer the king; and then, with bare bowed heads,
They march away in silence and in tears.
Upon a plain of Salamis near the sea
Small yachts appear upon light metal wheels
As prone to take the water: one of them,
With mighty wings outspread and raised in front,
Darts like an arrow straight against the wind,

And rises from the earth to upper air:
The wheels are hidden as the vessel rises.
Each different part, so perfect in itself,
So harmonised with every other part,
The vessel seems a monstrous bird in flight
As it speeds onward toward the Ægean coast.
Another vessel, rising like the first,
Goes south and westward over South Morea:
And one by one, as fast as I can note,
They shoot toward various regions of the realm.
To distant peaks where hopeless refugees,
In hard asylum from relentless foes,
Wait anxiously for death: freighted with these
They glide with lightning speed to Salamis.
Its precious load discharged, with store of food
Each vessel disappears in upper air:
And so they come and go till day declines,
And none are left except the Arcadians.
Their tottering limbs upheld by friendly hands,
The fugitives look out upon the change
While joy and misery gleam through hollow eyes.
Women are few among the rescued ones:
Children are very few. The night is past.
I see two battleships at Nauplia
With several merchantmen. The Brotherhood
Have disappeared before their enemies
The miltary and exploring bands
Have disembarked. All war materials
For Palamidi and Larisa heights,
Tractives of all varieties and powers,

The food and all supplies for Argos Plain
Are rapidly discharged. The exploring force
Discloses various wealth among the ruins.
A band of horsemen from Arcadia,
Guided, protected by the aerial fleet,
Is now on Argos Plain near Nauplia.
On trucks and wagons from the merchant ships
The Arcadians transport the needful stores
Of war material and machinery,
With coal supply from Nauplia and Argos,
To Palamidi and Larisa heights.
Tractive machines of smaller weight and power
Are laboured up the steeps by many hands;
But on Larisa's high Acropolis
The task is far more difficult and slow.
The battleships have driven the Brotherhoods
From Pyrgos, Patræ and Ægion ruins.
Abundant stores of food are found in all
With coal and merchandise of every kind.
Under protection of the aerial fleet
The Arcadian shepherds leave their fastnesses
In different detachments: older men,
Women and children, with their flocks and herds
And other wealth, all go to Argos Plain:
The younger men with all the beasts of burden
Go to the ruins or to Salamis.
A fleet of battleships from Salamis
Moments ago enters Piræus Bay.
The Brotherhood are gathered near the shore,
And view their ominous visitors with rage
And loud defiance: these are overlooked.

Nearing the base of the Acropolis
Is a large multitude of men and women
With bombs and all destructive implements.
In their first boundless rage the Militants
Forget the Acropolis in greed for blood;
And now they march upon a joyful work.
From all the fleet comes one long thunder roll
That shakes the Attic Plain from coast to mountains:
It ceases: all that host has disappeared.
The ships are silent as their dead; and now
A single shot explodes upon the quay,
And all the Brotherhood have turned in flight:
Farther and farther as their distance grows
Faster and faster peals the deadly roar.
Beyond Piræus in the greater city
The rain of death is all continuous,
And all extensive too from north to south
Until, within Athenæ's utmost bounds,
Not one remains who has the power to fly.
About the great Cyllene's northern base
Appears the death watch of the Brotherhood
That ever holds at all Arcadian mountains
Beyond the watch, over his northern slope,
The aerial fleet is hovering motionless;
And still beyond and farther up the height
I see a band of horsemen, very large,
Descend the steep behind a guiding ship:
It leads down Sythus River on the left,
Right toward the grim death watchers: suddenly
The fleet darts forward from the mountain side,
Over the Brotherhood and far above,

Whence with a rain of bombs they rend their foes
Who battle madly and return the fire
With wild and futile shots to upper air;
But death prevails: the Brotherhood divides:
The airships too divide and follow them,
Still keeping up their merciless attack
Till all have fled and left the way secure.
A battleship and several merchant ships
Lie in Lepanto Gulf at Sythus River
Where the Arcadians are journeying.
Upon the plain the band rides rapidly
For time is passing and the way is long.
The day is done. The guide ship shows her lights;
And in the distance toward the north appear
The brilliant lights upon the battleship,
And her great searchlight in expansive sweep:
In the protection of her armament
The pace grows easier. Upon the gulf
The merchant ships receive the Arcadian band,
Horses and men, and with the battleship
Sail eastward toward the Isthmian Canal.
The time flies fast upon the Argos Plain:
The Arcadian families are gathered in:
Their tents are up and little houses rise
Where children play about on every side.
The good Archbishop of Arcadia
And his subordinates were last to come:
They do a double work with hands and head.
The fields lie fallow, but on all the plain
Orchards and vineyards have incessant care.

The grade is done upon the Acropolis,
And a great engine on strong metal trucks
Is slowly crawling up its giant side
Upon the granite hold of Palamidi
The mightiest tractives, engines and great cranes,
And lofty derricks with extended arms
Exert their power; and, pendent in the air,
The heaviest dynamo ascends the steep.
The merchant ships that were the first to come
Are leaving Nauplia, all laden deep,
And others take their place beside the piers.
From Pyrgos, Patræ and Ægion ruins
The boundless wealth is all on Salamis.
Again the laden ships leave Nauplia:
The two protecting battleships are gone.
The railway scales Larisa to the crest.
Upon Larisa and on Palamidi
The rapid-firing and far-reaching guns
Command the plain entire: their dominant lights
Make the night luminous; and, all deceived,
Brave chanticleer pours forth his clarion.
Save in Athenæ all is done; and there
The work goes on. Both animals and men
Are plentiful among Athenæ's ruins.
The heavy laden wagons press along;
And ample cars, repaired from trolley wrecks,
All freighted up to full capacity,
Are drawn upon remaining trolley ways
From distant ruins to Piræus Bay.
The advance is rapid: every moment tells:

The delving bands are far upon their way
From east Athenæ to Piræus border.
With little intermission day or night
The laden ships depart for Salamis.
So great the pressure of abounding stores
That sailing vessels of a numerous fleet
Are utilised for transport: laden deep
These lie in harbour till the stress be passed.
In Hierisos Bay the battleship
With difficulty holds in check a host
That surges toward Mount Athos: near the mountain
Two merchant ships receive the holy men
And all their wealth. It is now evident
The multitude will brave the deadly fire
And overrun the whole peninsula:
That is a smaller host: from north to south
The countless hordes are slowly marching on,
Eating their loathsome way; and as they pass
They make the desolation desolate.
No food however foul, no living thing
Is left behind except the carrion birds.
Their dead receive no prayer, no burial:
They disappear: and so from day to day
They swarm along upon their southward course,
Some toward the Isthmus, some toward Attica.
Upon the Isthmus two great battleships
On either side, and rapid-firing cannons
Upon the south oppose the huge advance:
And yet so hunger mad, heedless of death
The mighty horde, the task for all that power

But for the obstruction of the waterway
Had been impossible. Straight through the fire
Upon both sides and front they drive along:
Some reach the deep canal and plunge right in
Where many sink to death: of those who swim
Quick-firing guns on the Morean bank
In close array leave not one soul alive:
And so they surge and break from noon till dark
In constant phrensied effort: hopeless then
They take their dreary way toward Attica.
The hordes now swarm among the Attic ruins
From east Athenæ to Piræus border
Five warships hold them back as best they may;
But crazed and numberless they still advance
Despite the deadly fire. Safely at last
The task is done in desolate Athenæ.
The cumbered piers have rendered up their stores.
The fleet is ready: battleships behind,
Wind-sailing ships in front, it leaves Piræus
While countless myriads of men and women
In solid mass are packed around the bay;
Throughout Athenæ and all Attica
They delve and scramble for a little food.
The Acropolis is safe: their loves and hates
Are all forgotten in their furious quest.
The times are passing with continuous change.
The fruits are gathered upon Argos Plain.
On Salamis capacious magazines,
Built of materials from Ægion ruins,
Relieve the laden ships; and ample stores

For years are sheltered and arranged for use.
The Militants who covered Attica
From north to south now congregate no more:
The fell disease of famine has appeared,
And each man flies his brother in distress.
On all the main the innumerable hordes
Are dwindling day by day: all plains and vales
And mountain sides are open sepulchres,
Reeking and loathsome. Never-sleeping guards,
And watchful airships ever on the wing
On all the waters about Salamis
Protect the island from the doom of death.
By means unknown Morean Militants
Are also stricken; and the islands near
Are visited in ways mysterious;
And all life withers in the blighting touch.
Far-reaching guns on Palamidi's crest
And on Larisa's great Acropolis
Have swept the enemy from Argos Plain;
And airships, vigilant and merciless,
Hold them far out beyond the nearest mountains.
For only two or three the ready rifle
Is ever used and never used in vain.
The lights on Palamidi and Larisa
Illuminate the plain and heights around.
The law of cleanliness is absolute:
Nothing is left to attract the carrion birds
Lest they be carriers of pestilence.
The wretched Militants are disappearing
Like snow before the southern breeze of spring.

The moans of dying and the blasphemies
Of stricken souls resound: and where one falls
He lies alone forever: so the pest
Moves on and on till it assails the last,
And then it dies for want of sustenance.
A very few survived: not one remains.
I see no more: the realm is underneath
A pall of darkness: is my vision done?

MEPHIE

Not done, my Prophet: there is more to come.

MUFFIE

The pall is rifting: it has passed away,
And all the stricken and the dead are gone.
Summer is rich with ripening corn and fruit.
The aerial fleet is larger than before.
Hellenes who fled from Asian slavery
To hidden wilds of lofty Caucasus
Are borne upon its wings to liberty:
They take the vacant places of the dead:
The fallen cities are in ruins yet.
The government remains on Salamis,
The Arcadians are on their native hills.
The women, children and the older men
Do all the work of peace: the younger men
Are in the fleet or on the Parnes Range
Fronting the wide extended Moslem host.
The Moslem fleet is in Lamia Gulf:
The fleet of Hellas is at Salamis,

At the Piræus and in Patræ Gulf.
Past rivers, vales and lofty mountain chains,
In southern course, the host of Ottoman
Moves on with labour arduous and slow
To reach the Vale of Springs: his fleet appears
Rounding the stormy height of Sunion.
To escape destruction absolute and sure
The patriot army from its mountain base
Retires upon the Isthmian Canal;
And firmly there, on the Morean side,
It makes its desperate stand for liberty.
The Moslem army is at Corinth Gulf
Upon the north, before the waterway
And patriotic force; the Moslem fleet
Is marshalled near it in Ægina Gulf,
The fleet of Hellas in Cenchreæ Bay
Guards the canal and fronts the hostile fleet.
It is the time: the guns of Ottoman
Burst forth in yet increasing thunder roll,
And all the lines where Hellas lies intrenched
Are deeply rent but silent as their dead.
The Moslem fleet is far superior
In weight and numbers, but the fleet of Hellas
Opposes greater skill to greater power.
A large half moon with wide extended wings
The hostile fleet bears on to the attack:
Its bolts fly true and fast. I can but feel
A deep foreboding and my spirit sinks:
Already one great battleship rides low
While Moslem thunders echo: suddenly

They are unheard though still continuous:
All drowned by one reverberating roar
That shakes the very mountains on their base.
I see the Moslem battleships go down,
Helpless before a power invincible;
And now I see them fly without restraint;
But while they go destruction follows them.
Acro-Corinthus on his mountain crest
Bears the great cannons and selected men
That saved the fleet of Hellas: now they rest;
But from all batteries facing Ottoman,
And all the warships in the fleet of Hellas
Comes one terrific peal; and Ottoman,
With all the unyielding bravery of his race,
Replies in deadly thunder to his foes:
And so the battle rages north and south
For subjugation and for liberty.
The aerial fleet is over Ottoman:
Two other airships from the distant east
Approach the fleet; and at the stern of each
I see the radiant banner of Japan
And Moslem crescent floating side by side.
On salutation by the stranger ships
The Hellene fleet darts off to Salamis.
Alone in upper air the ships descend
In graceful circles, one to Ottoman
And one to Hellas near the high command
Received with courtesy the ambassadors
Present their message to the hostile powers:
The rage of battle and the cannon's roar

Resound no more upon the Isthmian plain.
The carnage done, in their aerial ships
The envoys haste upon their embassage.
At Salamis the House of Government
Is decked with royal banners of Japan,
Hellas and Ottoman: king and ministry
Are all in session: the ambassadors
Of Moslem and Japan are there with them:
Japan's ambassador addresses them:
'Your Majesty and Ministers, I rise
To put before you, briefly as I may,
This opportunity for lasting peace
Between the realms of Ottoman and Hellas.
A word of explanation: In Japan
Are remnants of the European realms
In different parts under Japan's protection;
But as their numbers grew they longed and mourned
For home beneath their European skies:
Then our good emperor compassioned them
And promised them a home on Balkan lands
Beside the realm of Hellas. Ottoman,
With pleasant memories of better days,
Sent forth his powers to repossess those lands
Before Japan's great purpose was disclosed.
Japan at once appealed to him, and he,
With royal friendship and nobility,
Upon conditions honourable to him,
Promised relinquishment of all those lands
For stranger peoples and the realm of Hellas:
That promise holds: Japan and Ottoman

Never renigue nor disavow a pledge.
My friend, the ambassador from Ottoman,
Is here with ample power to sign a pact
Of peace and friendship with the realm of Hellas.
If you accept the terms he will impose,
Which he and I deem just and liberal,
You will have peace, Japan too will be free
To execute his generous designs.
He seats himself: the king gives quick reply:
The things Japan approves Hellas will do
If in the utmost limit of her power.
The Moslem envoy rises in response:
'Your Majesty, your answer to my friend
Gives me the greatest pleasure: it insures
A lasting peace between our hostile realms,
The war began against my own advice.
The little realm of Hellas is alone
In Europe's wide domain victorious
Over the bloody hordes of Anarchy;
And so I honour her and wish her well.
When we were hard beset on every side
By many enemies combined against us
Japan, our true friend, interposed for us
With mighty power, and forced our enemies
To grant triumphant honourable peace:
And when that noble friend appealed for you
I knew he would not, could not be refused;
And I am here with full authority
To sign the pact of peace between our realms.
These are our terms conditional to peace:

The realm of Hellas shall make restitution
To Ottoman of ten good battleships
For those destroyed; further, the realm of Hellas
Shall grant the use of her large merchant fleet
For transportation of his troops and stores:
If you comply an honourable treaty
Will be completed now; and I shall sign it
Upon the happiest moment of my life.'
With instant fervour on his final word
Hellas accepts the terms conditional,
And signs the precious pact with Ottoman.
Now all is changed: the desperate deadly war
That rent the realm has passed away, and peace,
With all prosperity and happiness,
With all her loves and sweet amenities,
Has come to bless the land. Old foes are friends,
And give the helpful hand of fellowship.
The Moslem fleet and merchant fleet of Hellas
Are in Cenchreæ Bay. With all despatch,
And all assistance and facility
Rendered by Hellas, Moslem troops and stores
Are put on board the ships. The laden fleets
Are sailing toward the City Beautiful.
I saw them go: I see them come and go
Till Ottoman disappears; and all the while
The aerial fleets of Hellas and Japan
Are ever on the wing between those realms,
Bringing descendants of the nations dead
To European homes of noble hope.
Without delay the merchant fleet of Hellas

Sails south and eastward through Suez Canal,
Past Ottoman's Egyptian colony
And southern Asia to far Japan:
Thence deep with anxious peoples and their wealth
The fleet returns upon its westward course:
To anchorage upon the Balkan shores:
And so it comes again and yet again
Bearing the exiles from the Asian world
To happier homes in European climes.
Japan's ambassador has set the place
And bounds of every people so that each
May have its independent government,
Its country, name and language on the earth.
Russia's contingent, largest far of all,
Is at Byzantium and the region round.
The different peoples of the infant states
Are prosperous through every toilsome year.
I see their generations come and go
With still increasing power and majesty:
I see the noble cities rise from ruins:
Athenæ too, more glorious than before.
The Asiatic masters and their slaves
Are driven far away on every side
As little nations grow to sovereign realms.
War clouds are gathering on the eastern coast:
Byzantium, the Queen on Bosphorus,
Attracts the wistful eye of Ottoman.
Japan, at war with several mighty powers,
Affords propitious opportunity
To gratify his dominant desire.

His navy, second to Japan's alone,
Spans all the Ægean near Gallipoli;
His army, facing the great waterway,
Sends forth reverberating powers of death
From Asian to European plains.
The Moslem battleships advance in line
From north to south upon the Hellespont:
The aerial fleet above the Moslem army
Circles in silence: all the northern shore
Of Hellespont is ominous and still.
Now all at once from all the Balkan front
Comes one continuous, tremendous blast
That drowns the Moslem roar on land and sea,
And shakes the distant shores of Marmora.
The mightiest battleships of Ottoman
Are helpless all before the Balkan power:
With every little moment some great ship
Is lurching, plunging helpless to its doom.
The fleet is gone: a part is out to sea:
The rest, the most, have gone below the waves.
The fleet away the fire miraculous
Is turned amain upon the Moslem host.
I see the swaths of death cut far and wide
Through all the long deep ranks of Ottoman:
I see his dwindling force refuse to fly
From hopeless battle: now I see them fly,
But all too late: their numbers dwindle still
Till little groups and solitary men,
Unarmed and wildered, groping toward the south,
Alone are left of all the Moslem host.

The thunder ceases with the setting sun.
The Balkan battle fleet from Marmora
Lies on the Asian side of Hellespont:
The Balkan transport fleet that followed fast
Is gathered on the European side,
Two days have passed, and all the Balkan force
With armament is on the Moslem plain
To wrench reprisal from its enemy.
I see the swift, hard march. The siege is laid;
And Ottoman, helpless in his capital,
Accepts conditions of the Balkan powers:
He cedes a zone extending southward far
From all the waterway and great Black Sea,
With all of Egypt and Suez Canal,
To hold forever; and the war is done.
As generations pass with lapse of time
The Balkan states increase till one great hope,
One will to hold their primal lands again,
Inspires them all. The Sea of Marmora,
Besides a great protecting battle fleet,
Is covered by a countless transport fleet
Bearing an army for the British Isles
To reposses their ancient Island Realm.
My vision changes: lands have disappeared
On every side; and I can only see
The realm of Hellas as it was at first.

MEPHIE

It is enough, my Prophet. You have seen
The infinite horrors and the desolation

Which must occur if the destructive powers
Acquire ascendency upon the earth;
And you have seen the slow and painful rise
Of man from depths of hopeless misery:
And what you saw, the world itself will see
If Heaven avert it not. Proclaim your visions
At once, at large that men may be forewarned,
And they may never be realities.
Leora, dear, a song before we part:
Sing us a love song in your happy vein.

LEORA
(Singing)

(1)

She lives again: my heart is glad today:
On deeds of hers the sun of victory smiles;
Pæans from all her mountains, vales and isles
Reecho far away.

(2)

So meek she seemed: I thought her spirit dead:
She only moaned and shed appealing tears
While cruel tyrannies of countless years
Rested upon her head.

(3)

She made no sign when over holy graves,
And storied fields that saw her great ones dying,
That bore her mighty charge, the Persian flying,
Strange Ottoman drove the slaves.

(4)

Despairing, desperate, at last she rose,
But, tottering, was able scarce to stand;
The weapon, trembling in her palsied hand,
Fell harmless on her foes.

(5)

I saw their gathering blows descend like rain;
I saw her life blood stream from every part;
I saw the metal pierce her very heart,
And yet she was not slain.

(6)

She stood at bay beside the ominous pyre:
Their fury grew with every labouring breath;
But all the fearful, fateful powers of death
Renewed her strength and fire.

(7)

The immortal closed: the circling cordon broke:
They saw her spirit and they felt her might:
The haughty alien lords are turned in flight,
Reeling beneath her stroke.

(8)

From slavery to glory; but where meet
The Orient and Occident she stands
Alone: the children of her sister lands
Are fettered hands and feet.

(9)

These follow her, their beacon star and guide,
Through ways of death where freedom's battle rages
Till galling gyves and manacles of ages
Are rent and cast aside.

(10)

Again the Moslem rage and high desire;
Again I hear the martial tramp of men;
The mortal enemies have closed again;
The land is all on fire.

(11)

I see her charge on many a bloody field,
On fiery citadel and rocky hold;
I see the wavering crescent backward rolled;
I see the tyrant yield.

(12)

She took no rest: her children ever bled:
And there is glory's emblem far and wide,
In every vale, on plain and mountain side,
Floating above her dead.

(13)

The fateful day: the peoples hear the call:
Her heart is true; her banner is unfurled
For man and liberty throughout the world:
Her king is deaf to all.

(14)

He lives in servitude to die in shame:
Let all reward that infamy can bring,
The ignominy of a traitor king,
Rest ever on his name.

(15)

O Hellas mine! my loved! your light of old
Was but the gleam of morning just begun:
The full effulgence of your midday sun
Is yet unseen, untold.

MEPHIE

Accept our thanks, Leora, for your song:
Great and appropriate to time and place.
My Prophet dear, we are about to part,
But not forever: we shall meet again,
And you will know it though you see us not
As surely as you know our presence here.

LEORA

Farewell, my Muffie, with a woman's love.

THE FINTO

Farewell, my Poet, with a poet's love.

MUFFIE

My Master dear, and you, my dearest Friends,
My heart is full! with fondest love, farewell!

MEPHIE

Muffie, my Prophet, sit beside me here,
And lay your head once more upon my breast.

(Muffie sits beside Mephie and lays his head upon Mephie's bosom.)

Farewell, my Prophet, with an angel's love.

(Muffie sleeps. Darkness overspreads Parnassus and all the realm of Hellas. The darkness is dissipated. Mephie, The Finto and Leora have disappeared. Muffie lies sleeping under a pine near the ocean. Muffie wakes.)

MUFFIE

They are not gone: I feel their presence yet;
Their gentle, firm support. The sweet loved voices
Whisper of sacred duty to be done.

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